TELOS

Number 74 Winter 1987-88

The Crisis of American Conservatism

Paul Piccone

NO LEFT TURN

Zaslavsky: Three Years of *Perestroika*
Pellicani: The Genesis of Capitalism
Söllner: Marcuse in the 1940s-1950s

RIGHT LANE ENDS
MERGE LEFT

Notes and Commentary:
Trumpener: West Berlin "at 750"
Pipa: Stalin and Hoxha
Anderson: The Gospel According to Jameson
Schuler: Baby M and the Politics of Gender
Herf et. al.: Reading and Misreading Schmitt
Payne: Talking Around Terrorism

MERGING TRAFFIC
ENTERING FROM RIGHT

Reviews: on Heidegger and Nazism, South Africa, The Future of the Democratic Party, Counterculture and Consumerism, Architectural Utopias, Philosophy of Art, Sociological Power and Conservative Readings of the Constitution.

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ENDS

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A Quarterly of Critical Thought

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The Crisis of American Conservatism

Paul Piccone

The spectacular success of the Right in the 1980s hides a paradoxical development: the social, cultural and political hegemony of conservatism has been accompanied by a hitherto unexamined fragmentation of whatever passed for conservative ideology to date. This may not be fatal — and has not been thus far — in routine political competition with the Left and with a liberalism caught in even more advanced stages of internal disintegration. Yet it has serious consequences: it makes it difficult or even impossible to implement and sustain any kind of coherent right-wing program. Thus tactical success in the last decade has been achieved by forfeiting whatever strategic ambitions the American Right might have had during its "long march" through the New Deal. Among other things, this state of affairs helps explain the unimpressive fate of most recent right-wing initiatives concerning foreign policy, abortion, school prayer, privatization, de-regulation, welfare reform, affirmative action, taxation, etc. Only the more devastating and well-publicized self-destruction of the Left and gradual dissolution of liberalism have deflected attention from a crisis which has brought about fundamental irreversible modifications within the ranks of American conservatism.

This internal confusion and lack of theoretical self-consciousness about conservatism's internal tribulations has come about to a large extent because, notwithstanding its professed predilection for clarity and precision, post-WWII American conservatism has gradually evolved into a movement so broad and differentiated as to make it impossible to unambiguously identify either political objectives or funda-

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mental value-commitments. It is hardly accidental that the Reagan Revolution has turned out to be no more successful than its *bête noire*, the cultural revolution of the 1960s or, for that matter, any other recent self-proclaimed revolution. Gone everywhere but in rhetoric is the traditional defense of power and privilege behind the ideology of competitiveness, *laissez-faire* economics, naked individualism and religious traditionalism. The issue today is not, and has not been for some time, the attempt to return to a minimalist central government overseeing the smooth adherence to constitutional provisions by otherwise autonomously functioning federal units, themselves solidly grounded on a thriving civil society. Rather, the main focus is the management of an expansive welfare state apparatus unresponsive to external political steering, difficult to reduce in size or scope, and altogether impossible to dismantle without catastrophic social consequences.

Of course, it has always been difficult to clearly define conservatism. As has been repeatedly pointed out,[1] despite the intense efforts of conservatives to root themselves in a solid tradition best suited to their austere tastes, conservatism has never amounted to a coherent political philosophy. As even some of its more astute advocates readily admit, it tends to reflect a vague "set of attitudes" rather than "rigorously developed views," so that its positions inevitably turn out to be "a series of trenches dug in defense of last year's revolution."[2] The recent rise of the New Right, neo-conservatism and libertarianism has not just complicated further an already confused conservative political landscape; it has generated an impasse practically impossible to resolve through normal internal discussions and compromises.

Furthermore, with the virtual disappearance of the Left and of liberalism[3] as serious political alternatives — what has hitherto provided the Right with its distinct identity — all the conflicts previously articulated along Left-Right political axes have been absorbed within the ranks of the Right itself, thus precipitating the internalization of that legislative paralysis typical of European parliamentary democracies. As

1. Samuel P. Huntington, "Conservatism as an Ideology," in *The American Political Science Review*, 1957, vol. LI, p. 471ff.

2. Paul Gottfried and Thomas Fleming, *The Conservative Movement* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988), p. ix and xv.

3. Already in 1957 Huntington foresaw the gradual internal dissolution of liberalism and the rise of neo-conservatism as a result of the irreversible institutionalization of the New Deal model of an interventionist and highly regulatory government. According to him: "a conscious articulate conservatism . . . can spring only from liberals deeply concerned with the preservation of [American] institutions." See "Conservatism," *op. cit.*, p. 473.

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Schmitt[4] and others have long since demonstrated, with the exception of periods characterized by what are perceived as major social crises, parliamentary democracies tend to become hopelessly deadlocked in irresolvable policy debates which (by default) guarantee the unimpeded extension of whatever *status quo* happens to obtain. When the Right expanded to virtually exhaust the entire political spectrum by means of a successful ideological colonization of neo-liberalism, it also inherited this problematic predicament. Before the 1960s, the Left-Right polarization allowed for the formulation of relatively clear policy alternatives which, even if never implemented, successfully rationalized existing administrative mechanisms by identifying shortcomings and prefiguring possible solutions. Thirty years ago it was still fairly easy to deduce from the predominant outlooks where the Left and the Right stood on any public issue. The Left generally stood for administrative centralization domestically and international disengagement in foreign policy, while the Right advocated administrative decentralization and international interventionism to checkmate communist expansion. Today this is no longer the case. Both the Right and whatever remains of the Left have come to include within their folds such a broad variety of perspectives that particular ideological positions are arbitrary and largely a function of the outcome of bitter internal political struggles. The rise of the managerial neo-conservatives and of the populist New Right within conservative ranks, and the kidnapping of the Left by particularistic corporate interests such as women, blacks and gays advocating special interests under the cloak of equality and justice, have exploded both political camps from within.

In the same way that it is still possible to circumnavigate the Mediterranean using Ptolemaic astronomy, nothing in principle prevents continuing to study the present American political landscape in terms of the old Left-Right dichotomy. The growing number of burdensome epicycles needed to make this dichotomy fit an increasingly recalcitrant political reality, however, suggest the need to devise more appropriate analytical tools. Social reality has changed too much since the French Revolution to warrant retaining descriptive political categories formulated around that time. Today they occlude more than they clarify. The major *statist* turn precipitated by the American New Deal and European Social Democracy — or by their less successful authoritarian

4. Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, translated by Ellen Kennedy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985).

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counterparts such as the Russian Revolution, Fascism, and Nazism — has rendered the old conflicts between workers and owners, capitalists andproletarians, individualists and collectivists, etc. no longer central. What sense does it make to place Western communists or even a Gorbachev within a Leftist camp when, notwithstanding successful PR efforts by the latter to sell the highly improbable *idea* of reform, *glasnost* or *perestroika*, communist positions in general and Soviet policies in particular are conservative to the core (i.e., unconditionally commited to the retention of existing power relations)? And how convincing are neo-conservatives in their effort to smuggle policies into the Right which only a couple years earlier were liberal fare? What does it mean for a coherent conservatism when, after opposing Keynesian policies for over half a century, that bulwark of conservative ideology, *The Wall Street Journal*, in the wake of "Black Monday," could confidently and unashamedly reassure its readers that government regulations and guidelines will prevent the system from a repeat of the 1929 crash?

Unlike old soldiers, who may not die but eventually fade away, old ideologies are much more difficult to get rid of. To the extent that they constitute that reality they subsequently adduce to legitimate, they are internally incorrigible and immune from what naive positivists once confidently trotted out as objective facts. After Feyerabend and postmodernism, the objectivity of these facts has become highly suspect — especially in the "social" sciences and humanities, where ideology and facts are indistinguishably interpenetrated. Today they are increasingly being regarded as building blocks molded by arbitrary narratives with no normative import. Thus it is extremely difficult, if not outright impossible, to either refute or transcend entrenched outlooks. All one can do is propose alternatives, the relevance of whose results will eventually legitimate the framework that generated them. In this respect, the obsolescence of the Left-Right dichotomy can only be demonstrated by proposing competing alternatives better able to explain contemporary social realities.

Here an analysis of which interests have been in real conflict over the past couple of decades, independent of ideological designations, helps understand not only *real* social divisions but also possible *future* political realignments. Contrary to all the recent theoretical chatter about "the autonomy of the political," primarily meant to combat old Marxist economic reductionism, political conflicts usually do, or at least should, express social divisions. If and when they do not, they signal political pathologies themselves in need of explanation. The continued

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universal acceptance of an obsolete Left-Right distinction in the political spectrum may be one such case.

That this distinction remains unchallenged is not surprising, given that new emerging social conflicts between what has been called the New Class (the technocratic-bureaucratic managerial elite) and the rest of the people they manage can be articulated conceptually only by intellectuals, who are themselves members of that same New Class. Thus they also have a stake in preventing the translation of these new social conflicts into political divisions. Consequently, either the translation does not take place, or the issues tend to be redefined in terms that allow only for further bureaucratic solutions. Anti-bureaucratic rhetoric tends to generate more bureaucratic practice. It is not unusual today to witness the creation of new bureaucracies whose main function is to oversee a de-bureaucratization and a decentralization which, not accidentally, never takes place. Naderism is only its most visible example: in the much-needed and well-meaning effort to challenge and rationalize existing bureaucratic practices, it inevitably precipitates the creation of new and more extensive bureaucracies, themselves eventually requiring rationalization and regulation (e.g. EPA, the terminally corrupt New York Health and Building Departments, OSHA, etc.)

Indicative of Democratic as well as Republican politicians' correct perception of deeply-felt popular resentment of New Class encroachments into every crevice of daily life is the fact that, at least since 1976 and up to 1988, every presidential candidate, with the possible exception of Mondale (who was, probably as a result, washed away in a landslide defeat), has run on an anti-bureaucratic, anti-Washington platform. Even more indicative is the seemingly contradictory fact that every administration since Roosevelt has effectively expanded the bureaucratic apparatus, even while explicitly advocating its reduction (that the Johnson Administration stands out as the only glaring exception to this debureaucratizing rhetoric complementing bureaucratizing practice only indicates the practical universality of the rule). But entrusting de-bureaucratization to bureaucrats is like entrusting the chicken-coop to the foxes. If Max Weber was mistaken in uncritically generalizing the efficiency of the exceptional Prussian bureaucracy of his day to *all* bureaucracies, he certainly was not too far off the mark when he pointed out their irresistible propensity to grow.

Be that as it may, the projects of decentralization, de-bureaucratization, or the re-empowering of individuals and communities in order to allow a minimum of self-determination concerning life-style, culture

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and identity, are some of the most important, if not *the* most important political issue today. Along with most other real issues, however, they remain incomprehensible and inaccessible to analytical approaches locked within Left-Right ideological blinders. Re-casting political divisions along New Class/populist lines not only helps make sense of contemporary socio-economic conflicts but throws considerable light on the trajectory of modern conservatism — its present paralysis and imminent, inevitable demise.

This political redefinition, however, even if successfully introduced to the forefront of public discussion, cannot be easily operationalized. The *services* and *entitlements* provided by the welfare state function as the equivalent of a powerful narcotic, desensitizing their beneficiaries to the hidden social and political costs associated even with the most efficient New Class management. *Individual* benefits bearing even the most outrageous *collectively* shared costs are practically irresistible. It is hardly surprising that the majority of privatized and alienated individuals, unaccustomed to reconciling the particularity of their individual predicaments and the pseudo-universality of social management, are overwhelmingly in favor of *extending* welfare state services while at the same time resisting their costs in the form of higher taxes, fees, regulations, freedom, etc. This predicament renders extremely appealing the increasingly successful political oxymorons of New Class agendas making undeliverable populist promises. When attempts are made to implement these projects, the results are either the stagflation triggered by the Carter Administration when it sought to deliver on at least some of its populist promises, or the legislative paralysis caused by the Reagan Administration's attempt to impose a populist right-wing cultural agenda on a *de facto* ruling New Class legislature.

This explains the apparently contradictory political predicament of the right-wing turn in the 1980s, when a conservative Administration was simultaneously burdened by a liberal Congress which systematically checkmated most of its programs. While providing the Administration with a very convenient apology for its failure to effectively pursue a truly conservative agenda, this state of affairs confirms the American electorate's dilemma *vis-à-vis* the welfare state. The outrage generated by the waste, unaccountability, expansiveness and general inefficiency of big government readily translates into a vote of no-confidence *in principle* and, consequently, support for a conservative executive branch promising qualitative reforms. But when it comes to specific local programs financed by general revenues, that very same voting public reverses itself

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by electing liberal representatives all too willing to sponsor *particular* instances of that very same legislation otherwise rejected *in general*.

Within such a paradoxical predicament it is all too easy for New Class neo-conservatives to set aside minimalist conservative ideology and substitute their own managerial agenda. Aided and abetted by the loyal Democratic opposition, still sworn to uphold traditional redistributive social-democratic policies, neo-conservatives have been exceptionally successful in administering a liberal welfare-state apparatus under conservative pretenses. The result has been the otherwise inexplicable domestic policy paralysis of the Reagan Administration.

This also gives away the secret of the New Class and explains the lure of any socialism, from the mildest forms of Social Democracy to the most oppressive versions of Stalinism. It is the promise of *security*. New Class paternalism retains its socio-political appeal as long as whatever opposes it fails to guarantee, in the name of freedom and autonomy, one of the most important preconditions for human happiness: economic security. Freedom as such will never effectively compete with more fundamental economic preconditions if the first excludes or curtails the second. A well-fed Socrates could self-assuredly claim that the unexamined life is not worth living while freely philandering with his acolytes after sumptuous meals. The underclass in the ghettoes or the working and lower-middle classes in the poorer suburbs, however, have to solve more substantive practical problems of nutrition, housing and burdensome mortgage payments before even beginning extensive examinations of the quality of their life.

The internal tribulations of conservatism are only likely to increase in the face of this ineluctable limitation. Concerns with freedom will remain secondary as long as the electorate lacks a minimal amount of basic material well-being. New Class paternalism, whether in neo-conservative or neo-liberal garb, will retain a significant social and political appeal. This is also why the recent success of conservatism must be seen primarily in terms of the failure of welfare-state liberalism, rather than as the triumphant assertion of a coherent eschatological outlook promising redemption from the waste and corruption of the New Deal and its aftermath. Only after Kennedy's "New Frontier" and Johnson's "Great Society" sought to fine-tune the New Deal interventionist strategy of merely providing a viable infrastructure for subsequent autonomous (but regulated) capitalist development by multiplying entitlement programs and massively intervening in economic life was the socio-economic system weakened so severely as to necessitate serious

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re-examination.[5] No matter how much power the federal government usurps, the system remains capitalist in nature. Thus capitalists can always exercise their veto power by refusing to invest so to precipitate the kind of crisis which doomed the Carter Administration. The Reagan Administration's supply-side reforms may not have balanced the budget or stabilized the economy, but they certainly redistributed the national product in favor of "the rich and famous."

The conservative call for fiscal responsibility, accountability, discipline and de-bureaucratization (coupled with a clear ideological subtext of anti-black and anti-feminist and anti-communist backlash) did provide a winning electoral formula. But by the late 1970s, the kind of conservatism that had resurfaced after the final defeat of the Taft wing of the Republican Party and the election of Eisenhower in the 1950s had itself become diversified beyond repair. The marriage of convenience with the Fundamentalist New Right, the New Class neo-conservatives, and the extremist libertarians did generate a large and successful electoral coalition, but at the cost of internal coherence and clarity of political objectives. The New Right's votes and funds, the neo-conservatives' skills and ideas, and the libertarians' philosophical appeal did revitalize an old, worn-out conservatism reduced primarily to defending traditional privileges and power relations under the banner of anti-communism, Western values and natural law. The price it exacted, however, was prohibitive and, to a great extent, explains the dismal fate of the Reagan Revolution.

The Conservative Collage

Of the four main branches of the conservative coalition, the old conservatives are the best-known faction, but by no means the most influential. Its vague belief in natural hierarchies (ineradicable inequality), the ineliminability of evil, the centrality of stable social institutions, organic communities and the primacy of national interests, commits this group to a defense of wealth, the New Deal *status quo ante*, and traditional power relations. Its elitism limits its appeal mostly to the privileged and those aspiring to join them. By itself, this group could never have harnessed an electoral majority necessary to gain political power. In a nation whose most cherished ideological tenets are social mobility, formal equality and institutional flexibility, the old conservatives' static vision was bound to remain marginal. Two exceptional condi-

5 See Hyman P. Minsky, "The Breakdown of the 1960's Policy Synthesis," in *Telos* 50 (Winter 1981-82), pp. 49-58.

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tions contributed to pushing it to political center stage: the failure of welfare-state liberalism and a fortuitous collusion of interests with new socio-political forces.

The neo-conservatives are probably the most important of these new forces. Their managerial expertise, communicative skills and administrative background provided the old conservatives with the organizational infrastructure essential to successfully seek political power. For the most part they are east coast intellectuals who broke with the Left over Israel, anti-communism, and the censorial left-liberal response to the Moynihan report,[6] and with the counterculture over lifestyle and infatuation with Third World primitivism, but who otherwise retained their New Deal outlook and general liberal values. Their alliance with the old conservatives is largely tactical since they are not all that interested in dismantling the welfare state and are instead firm believers in social progress, the elimination of social inequalities (at least in their ideology), and a cosmopolitanism that rules out any parochial national concerns. Their commitment to extending democracy and human rights does not make them too palatable to the old conservatives who, at any rate, have never quite forgiven them their radical past.

The New Right consists of a motley bunch, largely uneducated and populist, whose main contribution to the conservative coalition has been in terms of votes and funds. Rooted deeply in middle-America, these groups are the most negatively effected by New Deal social programs and stuck with having to bear their costs. They are the Archie Bunkers of the east coast, and the midwest and western Fundamentalists who have discovered their political clout. They normally abhor all intellectuals, including neo-conservatives, and otherwise resent the wealth and privilege of the old conservatives. Only their greater hatred of bureaucrats and of liberal New Class managerial elites pushes them into the conservative coalition. Their conservatism in social and cultural issues places them on a direct collision course with the neo-conservatives who, in turn, will never be able to tolerate the New Right religious dogmatism bordering on racism and occasional anti-Semitism.

The libertarians are basically right-wing anarchists distrustful of all governments and fiercely committed to individual freedom, private

6. For an account of the backlash caused by the response to the Moynihan report, not only concerning the rise of neo-conservatism, but also research on the underclass, see William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 4-26.

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property and communitarianism. Their contribution to the conservative coalition has been largely ideological. They have provided the Right with an extremely popular vision of entrepreneurship and individualism deeply rooted in American traditions. But precisely because of this, they resent the neo-conservatives' statism as well as the New Right's social and cultural dogmatism. They come closest to the old conservatives in their hatred of social equality and internationalism. They also constitute the least realistic faction whose proposals are almost entirely negative. Notwithstanding all this, they have managed to capture the imagination of a significant sector of the American electorate distrustful of big government and longing for more control over the forces directly effecting everyday life. Their impact has been primarily through well-organized think-tanks and a number of extremely influential economists particularly apt in media manipulation.

That these disparate factions came together and collaborated in the election of Reagan can be ascribed primarily to their common hatred of Carter and all his Presidency stood for. The main unifying issues were anti-communism and disenchantment with the welfare state. Today both issues have become moot. The rise of Gorbachev in the USSR and of a violently anti-Maoist rationalizing technocracy in China have all but eliminated "really existing socialism" as a credible ideological or economic threat. Militarily, the USSR fiasco in Afghanistan and the Chinese stalemate with Vietnam have revealed both major communist powers to be clumsy giants with clay economic feet. With communism reduced to a historical dead-end — a radical but highly inefficient version of that very same New Class domination[7] increasingly pervasive in the West as well — and welfare-state interventionism theoretically discredited across the entire political spectrum, the conservative coalition loses what was from the very beginning a weak unifying platform. Even Reagan's charisma could not prevent, after the Irangate scandal, a rapid programmatic dissolution.

To be sure, the seeds of internal disintegration had been there all along. From the very beginning of Reagan's Presidency, the conservative coalition turned out to be programmatically unwielding. All the irreducible internal differences resurfaced with the very first efforts to

7. See George Konrad and Ivan Szeleny, *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power: A Sociological Study of the Role of the Intelligentsia in Socialism*, trans. by Andrew Arato and Richard E. Allen (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1979). Of course, the classical elaboration of this thesis dates back to Milovan Djlas' *The New Class* where he developed this thesis to explain the new dynamics of Yugoslav sociaty.

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translate the conservative victory into concrete programs.[8] Combined with significant lingering Democratic opposition in Congress, internal factionalism within the conservative camp precipitated the paralysis that has characterized Reagan's tenure. Thus it is unclear how this coalition can hold up after Reagan's retirement from active leadership removes the hitherto indispensable charismatic glue. In retrospect, the conservative 1980s are very likely to be remembered as a peculiar historical accident. This does not mean, however, that a moribund liberalism is likely to make a come-back. Rather, it does prefigure a major political realignment in the US as a precondition to any substantial restabilization of a highly unbalanced system.

Conservatism by Default

In an unabashedly self-congratulatory tone, the publisher of *National Review*, William A. Rusher, opens his biographical account of *The Rise of the Right* with a 1950 quote from Lionel Trilling to the effect that liberalism was practically unchallenged intellectually and there were "no conservative or reactionary ideas in general circulation."[9] In view of the subsequent success of conservatism, the inference is that since then a coherent right-wing philosophy successfully displaced the previously triumphant liberalism. Predictably, the book closes with an approving analysis of Irving Kristol's claim that "liberals have no philosophy."[10] What he fails to add is that conservatives do not seem to have one either. To reiterate: the recent success of the Right has more to do with the collapse of Left-liberal ideology and the systematic discrediting of the welfare state than with any political objectification of a coherent conservative philosophy. To the extent that conservatism is usually parasitic on the vicissitudes of an ever-shifting Left-liberal project, the recent success of the Right can only be short-lived. The increasingly-felt absence of that Left-liberal otherness which previously provided conservatism with its identity threatens the irreversible disintegration of any conservative electoral alliance.

The conservatism of the 1970s, masterfully translated by Ronald Reagan into a successful political strategy in the 1980s, is actually a thin Hollywood facade hiding the ideological ruins of the four previously described socio-political groups. In addition to a shared hatred of the

8. See Fred Siegel, "The Reagan 'Revolution': 1979-1981, RIP" in *Telos* 60 (Summer 1984), pp. 125-129.
9. William A. Rusher, *The Rise of the Right* (Boston: William Morrow, 1984), p. 11.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 321.

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welfare state, their coexistence has been further encouraged by a weak Democratic foreign policy and the perceived decline of American international hegemony. It was not too difficult for a charismatic figure like Reagan to mobilize them against a liberalism reduced to a patchwork alliance of particularistic interests held together by the porkbarrel politics of affirmative action, comparable worth, and other homogenizing post-New Deal measures. To the extent that the Republican Party could present itself as a vague populist alternative to the predominant, bankrupt New Class rationality, it succeeded in gaining an impressive electoral majority. When it came time to implement a conservative agenda, however, the previously repressed internal contradictions resurfaced and paralyzed the Administration into merely managing existing programs with, at best, only minor modifications.

A lucky combination of events, having little to do with any new conservative policies have resulted in economic successes which have tended to legitimate the Reagan Administration's fiscal policies. The collapse of oil prices (as a result of overproduction stimulated by a number of fortuitous factors, such as the disintegration of OPEC and the Iran-Iraq war) helped reduce inflation. The spartan monetary policies of Carter's appointee to the Federal Reserve Board, Paul Volker, readjusted an imbalanced economy and contributed to an otherwise long overdue recovery for which, naturally, the new Republican Administration immediately took full credit. As for the impact of more distinctly conservative schemes rightly described by Bush in 1980 as "voodoo economics" (such as the supply-siders' tax cuts in contributing to balancing the budget, increasing fiscal revenues and otherwise reestablishing economic sanity), it simply did not happen. The extra discretionary income generated for the middle and upper classes did not go into new domestic investments but into extravagant consumption of mostly imported commodities or into highly capital-intensive industries having minimal immediate economic impact. The military Keynesianism triggered by the massive research expenditures for SDI and other defense programs have helped only some high-tech capital-intensive sectors of an otherwise flagging economy,[11] but at the cost of sending the deficit through the roof.

For the New Right and some of the old conservatives, however, the

11. For an account, written well before SDI was even announced, of its eventual failure as a priming mechanism meant to revitalize the US economy, see Paul Piccone and Victor Zaslavsky, "The Socio-Economic Roots of Re-Armament" in *Telos* 50 (Winter 1981-82), pp. 16-17

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most disappointing failures have been in the Administration's inability to realize any part of that social policy agenda dearest to "real" conservatives. School prayer, anti-abortion, pro-family welfare and fiscal reforms, re-privatization of secularized social functions etc., have proven to be legislative nonstarters. Most libertarians and neo-conservatives, not to mention the remaining liberal Democrats in Congress, could not digest any of these measures. On the other hand, the New Right and the isolationist old conservatives took their revenge on the neo-conservatives managing Reagan's foreign policy and international relations by allying with the Democratic opposition in creating enough obstacles to make anything but the mildest initiatives extremely difficult to undertake (Irangate resulted from this neo-conservative managerial elite's clumsy effort to bypass legal obstructions to its global interventionist foreign policy).

Far from being dismantled (as threatened) or even rationalized (as hoped), the massive bureaucracies administering the increasingly deteriorating social services provided by the welfare state have remained practically unaffected. Much to the dismay of the Right, the "conservative" legacy of the 1980s is not particularly impressive. Domestic policy is characterized by social, cultural and economic stalemate, while foreign policy is in shambles. The underlying ideological four-way split in the present conservative coalition cannot generate consensus on any particular issue. Consequently, however the Reagan years may come to be seen in the future, they certainly did not mark any sharp departures from either the interventionism of the New Deal or the indecisiveness of the Carter Presidency.

To the extent that American political dynamics no longer have much to do with the conservative-liberal dichotomy, these developments should not be surprising. The success of conservatism in the 1980s was made possible by the populist votes of the religious New Right, the managerial skills of the neo-conservatives, and the electoral appeal of libertarian ideals. All the old conservatives provided was an organizational shell to effectively translate these conflicting groups into an electoral majority. When it came time to implement the various contradictory planks of the Republican platform, the neo-conservatives were able to take charge and, by only slightly modifying the given, extend predominant trends. This neo-conservative leadership has not resulted from any successful imposition of their particular agenda but, rather, from the fact that, in a stalemated political context, mere administrators naturally have the upper hand simply because they can at

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least hold things together pending the resolution of broader (and irresolvable) ideological conflicts.

What this has meant is the extension of that New Class hegemony which initially asserted itself after the Great Depression. Only crises of that magnitude could facilitate the major power shift that did in fact take place at that time, and only a crisis of similar proportions may be able to fundamentally alter the present situation. In periods of relative social peace the existing system easily finds ways to successfully reproduce itself. Thus the democratizing spirit traditionally behind the Democratic Party's call for equality has been successfully subverted into particularistic demands for entitlement programs — manifestly for the benefit of disadvantaged or discriminated groups but actually benefiting primarily the army of professional middle-class managers required to run these programs. Similarly, the longings for decentralization and self-determination behind the Republican Party's stress on freedom and autonomy evaporate in the face of the military mobilization required to confront the mostly fabricated communist threat and the economic mobilization needed to deal with the present social and cultural crises. In both camps, populist demands are translated into counterproductive New Class agendas guaranteeing, first and foremost, the continuation of existing power relations and the social stratification that inevitably goes with it. Within the four main pillars of contemporary conservatism, these problems manifest themselves in different ways, but the outcome is almost always a neo-conservative subversion of what most of the rest of the present right-wing coalition regards as "authentic" conservative values.

Cultural Neo-Conservatism from Above

Consider the widely-distributed pamphlet recently published by The Institute for Cultural Conservatism.[12] In the effort to market an ideological perspective suitable for mass consumption and, consequently, translatable into a realistic political program, the authors try to blend a selective reading of traditional Western values and Catholic family policies with New Class statist ideology, thus generating contradictions undermining any conservatism they propose to recycle. The objective is to put together a majority coalition able to support a goverment and a society based on "traditional" values. This allegedly

12. *Cultural Conservatism: Toward a New National Agenda* (Boston: The Institute for Cultural Conservatism, 1987).

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calls for a government committed "to play an active role in upholding traditional culture." However, to the extent that tradition and culture can only develop and flourish autonomously from below, efforts to enforce them from above are doomed to fail. They are counterproductive, since they presuppose codification and formalization of a dimension of reality that thrives only if lived and experienced directly. To turn tradition and culture into state functions is to destroy them more effectively than by any direct repression. For this neo-conservative managerial elite, the only way to cure the patient is to kill him. The new activist "conservative" government not only contradicts the traditional culture it is meant to uphold, but systematically undermines the possibility of reconstituting that individuality and civil society without which traditional values are impossible to practice.

The introduction of a historically despised activist government as the guardian of "traditional culture" is not the only self-destructive feature of what the authors of the pamphlet hail as the resurgence of conservative philosophy. Additional problems arise when cultural conservatism is sloppily contraposed to its alleged antithesis, cultural radicalism, seen as an intolerant imposition of moral imperatives grounded on what are perceived as immediate needs, to the detriment of principles or long range commitments. By association, the authors ascribe to cultural radicalism a politics based on ruthless purism. While this so-called politics of ruthless purism has been at the root of prejudice, intolerance and, in the most extreme cases, even genocide, historically it has also been the source of strength in the constitution of traditions and of powerful political constituencies — especially conservative ones.

The ineradicable weaknesses of traditional cultures can only be overcome by constituting these very cultures not as fixed, codified structures dogmatically imposed from above by a religious or managerial elite, but as the source of freely-chosen referents for identity and thus subject to constant modification, reconstitution and redefinition. After all, cultures are unavoidably open-ended and incomplete. They can confront otherness, not necessarily as obstacles, but also as challenges to grow, expand and develop. Only when a culture has become so weak and exhausted that any otherness constitutes a threat to its very identity does it become necessary to *annihilate* that threat. The normal path strong cultures take is to *integrate* the threatening otherness and, in the process, not only remove it as a threat but also turn the original integrating culture into one stronger and more viable. Neoconservative managerial elites want both a vibrant culture which, as

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such, renders superfluous any neo-conservative management, and a strong activist state to manage and thus undermine that very same culture. As that traditional culture aspires to state power, however, it must become *political*, i.e., able to deal with radical diversity and conflict without integrating or annihilating otherness, but by negotiating and compromising with it. Here procedures take precedence over principles and, in articulating any viable governmental strategy, neo-conservatism must necessarily revert to its original liberal ideology. Thus, by default, cultural neo-conservatives end up forfeiting to their alleged opponents, cultural radicals, precisely that principled axiological outlook which has always been the most appealing feature of cultural conservatism. By projecting all the negative features of traditional cultures onto cultural radicalism, the neo-conservative managerial elite ends up smoothing out all the potentially rough hedges that may be offensive to any particular group. The result is blandness, ambiguity, and occasionally even self-contradiction. It thus unwittingly encourages within the conservative ranks precisely those traits historically associated with liberal indecisiveness, wishy-washiness and ultimately nihilism. Cultural conservatism from above thus becomes a major threat to authentic traditionalism from below.

While the neo-conservative authors of the pamphlet may not be all that traditional, they are neither naive nor unintelligent. The ascription of purism to their alleged counterparts, cultural radicals, is meant to cleanse what they market as cultural conservatism of unsavory traits normally associated with less sophisticated and generally catastrophic appeals to tradition: racism, ethnocentrism and prejudice in general. Thus reliance on "our historical and moral inheritance" should effectively inoculate us against any further recurrence of aberrations such as Nazism and Communism, seen not as highly undesirable and unfortunate possible outcomes of Western Civilization, but as historical accidents. But Nazism was successfully marketed precisely as a return to an archaic moral inheritance after "us" in Germany was clearly defined in racial and national terms. It is generally accepted that Communism is ultimately secularized Christianity — no matter how much conservatives wish to confuse it with a foreign totalitarian ideology forcibly imposed on an otherwise healthy Western society. Thus, an appeal to traditional culture is much too broad a criterion to separate the conservative wheat from the radical chaff. Western culture is sufficiently heterogeneous to include just about everything — desirable or undesirable — that might spring within it.

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A more fundamental problem has to do with the proposed moralization of politics. Morality and politics are inextricably related but also distinct. The first deals with ethical principles and the second with political procedures which, although ultimately rooted in particular traditions, must operate altogether independently of them (especially in societies comprising a plurality of cultures). When morality is translated directly into politics, or politics seeks to enforce morality, the tendency is towards a totalitarian politics enforced by self-perpetuating managerial elites. In this respect, the authors of the cultural conservatism pamphlet do not to pay enough attention to the absolutely essential and irreversible American separation of morality and politics to qualify as a program with a sufficiently broad appeal to allow the reconstitution of a politically viable conservative coalition.

What from the very beginning has made the US unique in the Western world has been the sharp separation of values, cultures and traditions from politics. This was not entirely a matter of choice, but also a result of the fact that the country was originally populated by minorities fleeing persecution. Thus the country's irreducible heterogeneity has allowed nothing short of that. The "*e pluribus unum*" inscribed on coins and official emblems accurately captures the real American tradition. But for the American "*unum*" to thrive it requires an autonomous and vibrant "*pluribus*." In proposing to forcibly absorb that "*pluribus*" by having it managed by a statist "*unum*" — even with the most honorable intentions — cultural neo-conservatism threatens to subvert precisely that tradition which may be identified as *specifically* American. Thus it ends up as a poorly-disguised parochial continuation of that New Deal interventionism which, by means of the culture industry and consumerism, produced the present nihilistic, homogenized American society which has always been anathema to traditional conservatives.

In addition to its dubious conservative credentials, the neo-conservative cultural manifesto provides a highly selective interpretation of Western values. Even a superficial reading reveals which among the many conflicting and often contradictory Western values the authors have in mind. Notwithstanding occasional rebukes to anti-Semitism, a predilection for Catholic family policy, and an attempt to appeal both to secular and religious audiences, the agenda comes off as surprisingly WASP (surprisingly, because there are hardly any WASPs in this camp). There would be nothing fundamentally wrong with an effort to universalize a de-provincialized Protestantism, were it not for the fact that the anti-modernist tone undermines its rationalizing message.

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The program of cultural Protestantism contradicts the economic framework within which it is to be implemented. A mass society effectively manipulated by highly-bureaucratized multinational corporations practically unaccountable to anyone cannot revert to a Protestant asceticism based on the work ethic, individualism and autonomy. It runs counter to the production and consumption requirements of the mass society and advanced capitalism forged by the New Deal after the collapse of precisely the entrepreneurial capitalism the cultural conservative pamphlet assumes as its socio-economic ideal. How can Coca-Cola, McDonald's and Chevrolet reach culturally conservative autonomous individuals no longer manipulable by advertisement? What would happen to the economy if conspicuous consumption gave way to traditional Protestant asceticism? What would the state regulate if civil society were strong enough to regulate itself independent of most active state intervention?[13] What would the neo-conservative managerial elite manage in case of the highly unlikely but clearly desirable drastic reductions in the bureaucratic apparatus of both the state and the private sector?

Traditional conservatives and cultural neo-conservatives can join ranks in successfully fighting the Left and the liberals, but after these opponents self-destruct or turn into neo-liberals, the victorious Right coalition

13. Of course, the popular right-wing contraposition of an autonomous productive and rationalizing market to a similarly autonomous parasitic and paralyzing state is a conservative fiction meant to legitimate redistributive policies favoring the wealthy sectors of the polity (mirrored by the neo-liberal contraposition of a healthy civil society confronting an oppressive state meant to legitimate equally suspect redistributions of political power from the wealthy to the New Class managerial elite). As Karl Polanyi and his school already showed in the 1940s in connection with debates concerning the legitimacy of the New Deal, the market is always constituted by the state. [See the special section on Polanyi in *Telos* 73 [Fall 1987], pp. 121-166). Yet the quality and quantity of state intervention must always be weighed against the loss of freedom and autonomy that it entails for both particular groups and individuals. Here again, it is not a matter of democratic self-determination by a presumably homogeneous polity, but of a political struggle among well-defined groups with conflicting interests regarding state intervention. As Marx pointed out over a century ago, notions such as the "people" or "civil society" are abstractions concealing sharp internal divisions. Against Hegel, he demonstrated that the managerial elite administering civil society is far from neutral: the bureaucracy is another particular class looking after its own interests, first and foremost. Thus unqualified calls for more "democracy" and increased self-determination for "civil society," far from expressing grass-root populist democratic sentiments, often hide New Class political strategies for empowering New Class spokesmen for "the people" at the expense of more traditional sources of power based on property relations. Democracy is redefined to include *economic* democracy, requiring a redistributive apparatus prefiguring New Class management.

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is unable to pursue much of a broadly-supported conservative program. Traditional populism and New Class neo-conservatism fall on opposite sides of the new political divide. Only as long as cultural neo-conservatives can manipulate traditional populists will the unified right-wing facade remain in place; even then, however, only at the price of merely administering existing programs without even hoping to introduce any qualitative alterations.

Fundamentalist Conservatism from Below

Conservatism's internal fragmentation, while not overly publicized by the various parties involved (obviously in the interests of safeguarding a minimal unity necessary to compete for political power), has certainly not escaped the conservatives themselves. Even the New Class/populist division has been seen by New Right spokesmen such as Robert Whitaker and Richard Viguerie as the basis of a major political realignment.[14] The problem is that, traditionally populism has comprised a variety of contradictory positions and personalities practically impossible to translate it into any sort of broadly-based political movement — even if only instrumentally.

This is not surprising: the culture industry, mass education and consumerism have long since taken their toll on the critical function of those sectors of the population which would be normally responsive to an anti-elite populist message. Historically, whatever populist resentments manage to surface tend to take the form of generally unelaborated and uninformed gut reactions to immediately felt injustices. Thus populism has always been embroiled with racism, ethnocentrism and the worst possible prejudices, which make it susceptible to demagogic appeals (which in Europe took the extreme forms of Nazism and fascism). In a country as ethnically, racially and culturally diversified as the US, this creates a major problem in building a broad coalition

14. For a discussion of this, see Gottfried and Fleming, *The Conservative Movement*, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-95. Even Rusher foresees that the "clash between the producers and the verbalizers may provide the principal grist of domestic controversy in the United States for the remainder of this century," *The Rise of the Right*, *op. cit.*, p. 323. Gouldner's theory of the New Class was postulated on the basis of this class' access to what he pompously called CED, i.e., the culture of elaborated discourse. Influenced far too much by Basil Bernstein and English linguistics, Gouldner overemphasized communication at the expense of production. He was correct, however, in identifying the remaining academic ruins of pseudo-critical theory (Habermas), based on a *pastiche* of functionalism, American pragmatism, system theory and communication theory, as New Class ideology. See Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1979).

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able to vie for political power anywhere but in the most localized contexts.

Moreover, this intermingling of populist, communitarian, and anti-elitist sentiments tends to receive the most accessible systematic articulation in particularistic religious contexts generally too intolerant of differences to allow political collaboration even among the most structurally similar groups. The resulting sectarianism not only precludes the creation of stable political coalitions but fails also to clearly demarcate politics from morality. Thus legitimate longings for autonomy and self-determination politically self-destruct by demanding universalization over other structurally-similar but doctrinally-deviant factions. It is all too easy for New Class ideologues to dismiss these groups as dangerous irrational aberrations requiring strict monitoring from a strong central government.

The recent Tennessee textbook case is paradigmatic of the problems New Right communitarianism faces when confronting state power. The demand for community control of education clashed with state-mandated standards of universal mass education. The Christian fundamentalist plaintiffs sought to exercise what they regarded as their right as parents to educate their children along traditional cultural lines. This clearly excluded the teaching of evolutionary theory and any other scholarly or scientific part of standard instruction seen as conflicting with a strict reading of the Scriptures. Irrational as this may seem from a secular perspective, the case did express legitimate communitarian sentiments and pitted local autonomy against state intervention. After all, for autonomy to be authentic it must entail the right to will what, from the perspective of rationalism, must appear as irrational. The choices a community makes will consequently not be invariably in accord with abstract Enlightenment rationality — the conventional wisdom of New Class neo-conservative orthodoxy. Genuine autonomy and self-determination consist precisely in the possibility of differing from standards of this type. In terms of New Class ideology, however, the issue became readily redefined as one contraposing obscurantism and zealotry to objective knowledge, rather than community vs. the state. Given this New Class formulation, the communitarian side had no chance, especially since its position was not defended in terms of community self-determination and autonomy but along self-rightous lines demanding (in the name of religious freedom) the legitimation of sectarian views against what the state defended as guaranteeing minimal rights to equal education. Unable to transcend

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its sectarian particularism, the New Right inevitably succumbs to the pseudo-universality of the state. Whatever emancipatory communitarian spirit it may advocate thus ends up equally repressed in the process.

A "Conservative" Supreme Court?

The failure of conservatism to implement anything reminiscent of a traditional conservative agenda in the juridical domain is worse than in both the legislative and the executive areas. Even at the Supreme Court level, where the Reagan Administration could have made the most lasting difference, timid New Class pragmatism and what is perceived as urgent *raison d'état* have had the upper hand. Any conservative hopes that the appointments of O'Connor, Scalia and Kennedy would result in a genuinely conservative majority able to roll back *prima facie* unconstitutional welfare-state legislation like affirmative action, abortion, rent control, etc. have been dashed. On the basis of recent decisions, the Rehnquist Court promises to be more reminiscent of the liberal Warren Court than anything conservatives may have had in mind. Only if conservatism is understood as the uncritical defense of existing institutions and practices can the present Supreme Court, on the basis of decisions made so far, be regarded as even remotely conservative. But this is not how flesh-and-blood conservatives have understood themselves, nor is the present direction of any of the main branches of government what conservatives had in mind as their program. Rather, the present Supreme Court is "conservative" only in the sense that it is uncompromisingly committed to defending the *status quo* which today happens to embody the predominant liberal philosophy of the past half a century.

This state of affairs is problematic only if the analysis remains locked within the liberal-conservative dichotomy. Seen in terms of the qualitatively different categories of "populism" and "New Class," the situation becomes considerably clearer. After all, Supreme Court justices are, first and foremost, lawyers, i.e., privileged members of the New Class managerial elite, thriving on the one-dimensional logic of mere administration. From the Georgia sodomy decision to *Falwell v. Flynt*, the Court has systematically placed more emphasis on expediency than on principle. In this it is fully in tune with the age of narcissism when immediate gratification always takes precedence over broader considerations. *Nolens volens*, the Supreme Court also has come to reflect precisely those negative traits of the 1960s that traditional conservatives have unsuccessfully sought to combat ever since.

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Shell-shocked by the potential long-range impact of the AIDS epidemic, the Court in the Georgia sodomy case ruled against individual rights to privacy or protection against state invasion. In the effort to contain at all costs unorthodox sexual practices conducive to the spread of AIDS, the Court has failed to provide a strong interpretation of the First Amendment, not necessarily as a states' rights document as old conservatives and libertarians usually interpret it, but as the most fundamental of all amendments.[15] It practically endorsed state intervention in everyday life — something not explicitly but by implication clearly covered by the Bill of Rights — at the expanse of that community autonomy and privacy historically defended by conservatives. Ironically, this decision has not in the least frightened the already mobilized gay community against which it was clearly directed, and will have absolutely no impact on the AIDS epidemic. On the other hand, it has considerably weakened individual rights of privacy *vis à vis* a state intrusion in everyday life growing increasingly dangerous, not so much because of potentially sinister political designs (the nightmare of previous generations of liberals), but as a result of bureaucratic incompetence and institutional corruption.

Similarly, in the San Jose rent control decision, the Court again failed to take a strong stand on property rights in favor of constitutionally-dubious but politically-expedient local measures meant to rationalize the consequences of an otherwise irreparably bankrupt welfare system and federal housing policy. Instead of privileging market mechanisms and property rights — traditional staples of conservative ideology — the Court simply took the easy way out and reaffirmed the *status quo*. Afraid of contributing to the rising cost of increasingly scarce housing and to the new social plague of homelessness, the Court gave in to short-term expediency by coming down on the side of city government against the landlords. In so doing, it legitimated increased governmental intervention in housing and deflected attention from the socio-economic causes of the present housing crisis: on the social level, the disintegration of traditional family and community infrastructures; on the economic level, the skyrocketing costs of construction as a result of monopolistic practices of builders, featherbedding by well-entrenched unions in the construction industry, and absurdly disruptive government regulations on city, state and federal levels. In legitimating San Jose's stop-gap rent-control measures, however, the Court has indirectly

15. For a discussion of the central role of the First Amendment, see the "Special Section of Mitchell Franklin" in *Telos* 70 (Winter 1986-87), pp. 6-57.

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contributed to safeguarding New Class privilege, encouraging further state intervention in housing (notwithstanding the scandalous record of HUD — one of the most corrupt, counterproductive and inept government agency in post-New Deal history), and unwittingly promoting conditions responsible for homelessness.

The Supreme Court decision tends to safeguard existing New Class privileges since rent-control regulations, contrary to standard tenants associations' rhetoric, do not primarily protect the poor and the elderly on fixed incomes but, rather, entrenched middle class professionals well able to bear the slightly higher rentals an unregulated housing market would bring about. Rent regulations clearly benefit stable middle-class tenants who have kept their by now bargain-priced rentals over a number of years and practically do not give them up except in case of death. While able to afford even better housing at significantly higher prices, middle-class professional tenants in large cities like New York hang on to their bargain flats as a birthright. Clearly, this does not help the poor or the young since they tend to be both unstable and transient, and thus unable to secure any of the scarce decent housing compulsorily subsidized by rent control regulations. In the long run, it makes decent affordable housing increasingly scarce by discouraging all but the most urgent upkeep on the marginally-profitable existing housing stock which, as a result, deteriorates rapidly and is not replaced. Thus in New York City alone there are over 8000 no longer habitable buildings forfeited at one time or other by the landlords to the city in lieu of unpaid property taxes — buildings practically destroyed by rent control regulations that made it more profitable for landlords to abandon than to continue owning. It further discourages private investment in low and moderate income housing, since returns are far below what can be normally expected in other areas open to private capital. As a result, the housing market is practically destroyed.

To the extent that the nature of this crisis makes it impossible to provide both drastic *political* solutions at the local level (where it is out of the question to repeal rent-control laws directly benefiting the majority of the voting population), and a *market* solution (ruled out by rent-control regulations), it leaves the federal goverment (by default) as the last possible resort. This means that, notwithstanding all the horrors of past federal housing policies, the government ends up being called to intervene in an area where it has shown itself to be particularly incapable of doing anything useful; on the contrary, it wastes taxpayers' money and creates ghettoes — ghettoes so immensely worse than traditional ones

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that some of them have had to be removed by bombing (the notorious Pruitt-Igoe project in St. Louis). From the viewpoint of the managerial elite, however, the predicament is not all that undesirable. The massive federal bureaucracy necessary to manage any kind of housing policy commensurate with the task at hand will not only provide lucrative employment to an army of New Class professionals but also reinforce the new dual system of social stratification.

Finally, it will not have much of an impact on the problem of homelessness, whose causes are deeply rooted in a process of family and, more generally, social disintegration accelerated to a considerable extent by state colonization of community life. While warehousing the homeless in low-income public housing — even if crime-ridden and otherwise substandard — is certainly more humane than having them freeze in the streets, the Supreme Court's stamp of approval on current local housing policies will not do much to make available a substantial amount of affordable housing. The further social disintegration engendered by expanded state intervention is in the long run likely to intensify the problem rather than mitigate it.

In the Tennessee textbook case, the Court not only reasserted the primacy of state mandates against New Right communitarian demands for autonomy and self-determination; more importantly, it even relegitimated the state monopoly in secondary education. Originally introduced to provide a minimal equal education as a democratic right (nowhere spelled out in the Constitution), universal mass education has turned out to be a sophisticated and highly successful strategy to homogenize a heterogeneous American population otherwise unresponsive to the socio-economic preconditions for the New Deal rationalization of post-*laissez-faire* capitalism: mass production and mass consumption. This project was successfully completed by the 1950s with *Brown v. the Topeka Board of Education*.

Subsequently overloaded with other extra-educational social tasks such as reversing the effects of racial segregation in housing, and burdened with inadequate facilities and incompetent personnel, primarily as a result of underfunding, secondary education gradually deteriorated to the level of a low-security detention system. Today it cretinizes more than it educates. It no longer benefits anyone in particular — with the possible exception of the massive professional-educational administrative apparatus.[16] The old conservative effort to replace it

16. See Frank Fischer and Alan Mandel, "Educational Policy in High-Tech America:

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with a voucher system guaranteeing decentralization and direct market-like consumer and community control was clearly meant to subvert a state-sponsored attempt to force racial desegregation which, like most other welfare-state measures, failed on its own. Increased busing has not succeeded in reducing segregation significantly, primarily due to increased white flight to suburbia. Today efforts to decentralize compulsory secondary education are no longer directly connected with supporting racial segregation and reflect a serious commitment to improve a system which has ceased to deliver on its promises. In the Tennessee textbook decision the Supreme Court could have triggered desperately-needed educational reforms, followed a truly conservative agenda, and relocated secondary education within its proper constitutional place — outside direct government supervision and unburdened by state manipulation to achieve extraneous socio-economic goals. The Court chose the timid New Class route of siding with state management against all other considerations.

Of all these decisions, however, *Falwell v. Flynt* must have been the most offensive of all — particularly to the New Right since it involved directly one of its most outspoken leaders. This was all the more politically undigestable since it may have been possible for the Court to reaffirm an absolutist reading of the First Amendment while at the same time finding in favor of Falwell. In that particular case, not only was the material published in exceptionally poor taste, but the publisher knew beyond doubt that it was false. It was clearly meant maliciously to slander Falwell while at the same time, in case of litigation, to cash in on the ensuing publicity. To make things worse, the Court decision was not particularly aimed at constitutional rights but at rapidly multiplying tort cases choking the lower courts and creating havoc in the insurance industry. Once again, the Court chose the instrumental rather than the principled way out and legitimated the possibility of practically unlimited slander of public figures. As for the First Amendment, it could have been easily defended otherwise.

The same thing has happened in case after case involving affirmative action, contract law, criminal cases, etc. Neo-conservative New Class managerial expediency has had the upper hand over any principled conservative readings of the Constitution. In the legal structure, as in every other field, the conservative revolution has simply not taken place.

The Ideologies of Excellence," forthcoming in *Telos* 75 (Spring 1988), who argue that much of the present crisis in education is manufactured by the managerial elite for self-serving purposes.

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A slightly modified but essentially unchanged timid New Class managerial ideology continues to dominate under new personnel but on the same general pragmatic principles. In this area as well, the success of conservatism in establishing an absolute majority in the Court has been achieved precisely by compromising whatever may have passed for a genuine conservative agenda as recently as 15 years ago. In today's ruling conservative coalition the old conservatives, the New Right, neo-conservatives, and libertarians all read the Constitution differently. Lacking a shared understanding of what constitutes a "real" conservative agenda (impossible to achieve given the irreconcilable ideological differences among the various factions), the easy way out is to extend the logic of the given by bending principles whose rigorous application may have immediate disruptive consequences. From regressive measures meant to maintain existing power relations, most traditionally-conservative policies have paradoxically become progressive and emancipatory. At the same time, statist liberal measures, now forcefully defended by both neo-conservatives and neo-liberals, have also reversed their political sign. This is only another indication among many that it is high time to reconceptualize social and political reality by means of more appropriate analytical categories.

After Pseudo-Conservatism?

While there may be doubts concerning the nature and extent of the coming realignment in American politics, it is clear that the conservative coalition that produced landslide elections of two Republican Administrations is in at least as deep trouble as its liberal counterpart. What is likely to keep it in power by default in the immediate future is the continuing ideological and organizational ruin of the Democratic Party. After Reagan and his immediate successor, however, that will no longer be sufficient. The conservative revolution that never was will continue flickering as occasional outbursts of populism. The inability of this populism to transcend its particularity and translate into a political movement with a broad appeal across ethnic, racial and religious lines without a New Class mediation will mean that its political impact will be largely a function of who will best be able to manipulate it.

While the present Democratic Party can best articulate and consequently instrumentalize *economic* populism by recycling new and improved versions of New Deal coalitions, its homogenizing logic will at the same time alienate those concerned primarily with cultural issues. The present Republican Party, on the other hand, can continue paying

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lip service (as it has) to *cultural* populism, but will run into populist resistence in continuing to market its irreversible commitment to wealth and privilege. Thus both parties as presently constituted remain unable to fully mobilize the swelling populist ranks. To a great extent, this explains the present chaotic nature of politics. Pending a major political realignment (difficult to even imagine, given the present overwhelming cultural hegemony of the New Class), American politics will remain chaotic and at the whim of the contingency of whatever events will manage, as usual, to catch reality by surprise.

Theory and Society

Renewal and Critique in Social Theory

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Three Years of Perestroika

Victor Zaslavsky

The third year of Gorbachev's rule has come to an end. From the outset he proclaimed the policy of *perestroika* and proceeded to elaborate a strategy for restructuring Soviet society. Today this strategy is undergoing its third reformulation. Gorbachev launched his policies in a rather traditional fashion, stressing scientific and technological progress and a radical improvement in labor discipline and responsibility. On the one hand, he decided to reduce investment in new industrial plant construction, emphasizing instead the modernization of existing facilities. On the other, he attempted to resurrect the *Stakhanovism* of yore. In 1985 the mass media ran stories for months about workers setting production records or managers successfully implementing technological advances. This strategy, a carryover from Andropov's reign, quickly proved fruitless. Indeed, one of the fundamental reasons for the Soviet economic crisis was the collapse of the incentive system. The old *Stakhanovism* had become a symbol of workers' wage cuts decades ago, with rhetoric and slogans concealing the increase in mandatory production quotas.

After the brief first phase, the strategy of *perestroika* shifted to economic reforms, whose main thrust was the self-financing and autonomy of industrial enterprises. However, to date the restructuring of the economic mechanism has succeeded only on paper. The reasons for this are many and can hardly be blamed on lack of resolve at the top. Various

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reformist projects met with problems that have yet to be solved in the world economy, either in theory or in practice. Consider the problem of price setting which has been the subject of open debate both in Soviet mass media and in specialized publications.[1] According to reformers, profits should become the main yardstick of an enterprise's success or failure. Many Soviet economists now praise profit as the best means of rewarding productive labor and an objective method of comparing the costs and results of production. But prices in the Soviet economy are administratively set; consequently, the profits of an enterprise are still determined by central planners, who can establish a low price for a given product and wipe out the profits of the most productive factory. The history of the *kolkhoz*, compelled to sell their products to the state at state-established prices that for many decades were too low to even cover the costs of production, illustrates this Soviet practice.

The only viable alternative to administrative price setting is the traditional market mechanism which sets prices by supply and demand. But how can the market mechanism be transplanted to a Soviet economy dominated by state property, where private or cooperatively-owned property is practically absent and almost every product is subject to shortages? The Soviet economy has cut itself off from the world market for half a century by closing its borders, imposing a state monopoly on foreign trade and maintaining the inconvertibility of its currency. The market mechanism could be reintroduced by reforms so revolutionary as to destroy the central planning mechanism and the one-party state, but it would be naive to expect the *nomenklatura* to sacrifice itself for the sake of reforming society. As the noted bard and writer Bulat Okudzhava said, today the Soviet Union has "revolution in the air and no revolutionaries."

Gorbachev has recognized that *perestroika* faces not only opposition from anti-reformers, but also from the populace. A Soviet journalist has described the social atmosphere currently reigning in the Soviet Union as follows: "During the last decade scepticism, suspicion and cynicism have corroded the social conscience. Those who believed in the better future were taken for fools . . . The staunchest pessimism prevailed in discussions of economic problems."[2] At an important

1. *Voprosy ekonomiki* (1987), Nos. 2, 3 and 5, *Literaturnaia gazeta* (August 12, September 15 and September 30, 1987).
2. A. Levikov, "Veriu-ne veriu," *Literaturnaia gazeta* (October 22, 1986).

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plenum of the Central Committee in January of 1987 "it was recognized that the only way to solve the difficulties of *perestroika* is a massive democratization of society, above all in the economic sphere."[3]

Words and slogans concerning "democracy," "democratization," "learning democracy" now appear in the Soviet press as often, if not more, than *glasnost* and *perestroika*, the buzzwords of Gorbachev's first two years. But what does "democracy" mean in a one-party regime? To date, the principal achievements of Soviet democratization include the accessibility and reliability of information (not to be confused with freedom of the press) and a certain buttressing of electoral institutions. In addition, there has been advance word of new measures intended to democratize industrial production, particularly the introduction of planning "from below" with worker participation. Since January 1987 onward there have been no politically motivated arrests, even though the legal means to do so still exist. Finally, the first steps towards liberalization of private enterprise have been taken with the new law on individual economic activity.

The practical and theoretical limits of democratization in a one-party state require a separate analysis. But even at its current level of democratization, *perestroika* amply reveals the contradictions inherent in reforming Soviet society. While new tensions and conflicts arise, popular indifference, mistrust and apathy are not diminishing but, in some instances, even increasing. Party officials now face the most critical phase of their careers. The escalation of internal political struggle, often undiscernible from abroad, now manifests itself in the generational turnover of the bureaucracy, in the territorial shifts of the ruling cadres and in the removal of corrupt elements. Popular reactions to the first timid steps toward democratization exert a notable influence on this political struggle.

Glasnost has, for the first time in Soviet history, opened up the administrative process and, in some cases, subjected the individual administrators to public scrutiny. Its success inside the Soviet Union and abroad is undeniable. At the same time, the majority of the party apparatus and economic planners have no doubt been irritated by the new policy. "In the end, the power of the Central Committee has grown at the expense of the local party organs," writes the party secretary of a Siberian region, justly connecting this process with the policy of *glasnost*.[4] The resistance of the party apparatus is no surprise, as *glasnost* limits

3. "Yanvarskii Plenum CC KPSS," *Strana i mir* (1987), No. 40, pp. 39.
4. *Ogonek*, (1987), Vol. 24, p. 4.

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the powers and casts doubt on the privileges of this social stratum. Several surveys of the attitudes of party officials and economic managers toward reforms published during Andropov's reign indicate that only 15-20% of those surveyed support radical reforms. The majority favored "stabilization programs" and expected to achieve significant economic progress without any structural changes in the economic mechanism and existing methods of development.[5] It is not surprising, then, that the Moscow party chief Yeltsin, one of the most decisive and resolute reformers, managed to remove two thirds of Moscow party functionaries in two years, encountering resistance that, in the end, led to his demotion. As the well-known writer Vasily Bykov emphasized, the party machine is full of people "who have for many years exercised and flaunted their conservative ideas" but now, under Gorbachev, "have started afresh, claiming that reforms are necessary and that they had wanted them all along."[6] However, despite the resentment of party officials, or perhaps because of it, popular support for *glasnost* has been growing. In fact, so far *glasnost* is the only strong point of the democratization strategy, even if some observers have correctly pointed out that *glasnost* could lead to social destabilization and disruption of public order without accompanying institutional and economic reforms.[7]

Unlike *glasnost*, measures intended to strengthen the institution of closed ballot elections with more than one candidate, and to introduce cadre rotation, did not achieve their objectives. First of all, the very idea that productivity and efficiency will improve once managers are chosen by the workers remains in doubt. The lack of market relations means that workers have no objective criteria by which to judge their managers. As the Hungarian experience indicates, management candidates who stand the best chance of getting elected are those who stress "a flexible approach to discipline, tolerance of absenteeism, and distribution of earnings in the least stressful way, i.e., in egalitarian fashion." Moreover, many observers note that, in a single-party system, party functionaries can "fix" an election even with more than one candidate running. As a *samizdat* author remarked: "The *apparatchiks* have accumulated a lot of experience in manipulating elections. The

5. T. M. Diafarli et al., "Nekotorie aspekty uskoreniia nauchno-tekhnicheskogo progressa," *Sotsiologiceskie issledovaniia* (1983), No.2, pp. 58-63.

6. *Literaturnaia gazeta* (May 14, 1986).

7. V. Shliapentokh, "Soviets Head for Showdown on Reforms," *Globe and Mail* (July 21, 1987).

8. M. Petsching, "Causes of Difficulties in Changing the Normal State of the Hungarian Economy," *Acta Oeconomica* (1985), Vol. 35, Nos. 3-4, p. 238.

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factory managers, even those elected by closed ballot, always subscribe to the opinions of the administration, not the workers."[9] In the same vein, a recent article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* corroborated this: "The *apparatchiks* have quickly learned how to sidestep the changes brought about by *perestroika* . . . Often, especially in the outlying regions, the same bureaucrats hide behind the facade of electoral reform and pretend to follow democratic practices and *glasnost*."[10]

These feeble steps toward electoral reform, so easily blocked by the apparatus, did nothing but reinforce the cynicism, apathy, and fear of the populace. The same holds for the incoherent practical measures attempting to reconcile the irreconcilable. Thus Gorbachev's original tactic of forging a compromise between traditional Soviet values and society's evolving needs suffered a grievous blow during the so-called "campaign against unearned income" in the second half of 1986. That episode merits a closer look.

In Soviet ideology, utopian values coexist in equilibrium with those fostered by economic development. On the one hand, the ideology proclaims complete equality, elimination of status differences, economic security, an egalitarian distribution policy and solidarity of a classless society; on the other, it justifies inequality arising from the varying productivity of different citizens and accepts the market principle in its distribution policies. In 1986 the major contradictions in Gorbachev's policy arose from the effort to pursue these contrasting values simultaneously.

One of the first results of Gorbachev's campaign for accessibility and authenticity of information was the publication of some statistics on wealth and salary inequalities in the Soviet Union. Excerpts from unpublished studies of bank deposits appeared, indicating that about half the deposited total was made up by only 3% of the accounts, each containing an average of about 20 thousand roubles. *Literaturnaya Gazeta* published an article about an unnamed but typical region that had 19 millionaires and "countless numbers of people possessing several hundred thousand roubles each."[11] All of these enormous holdings accumulated without private property in the means of production, without a stock market, and without inherited wealth.

The populace needs no statistical data to discover economic inequality. It is evident in everyday life. Another result of *glasnost* is that

9. V. P., "Kadri, ottepel i perspetivyi perestroiki," *Forum* (1987), Vol. 17, p. 16.
10. V. Drozd, "Tak vernetsia liikh vremia," *Literaturnaia gazeta* (September 30, 1987).
11. *Literaturnaia gazeta* (October 1, 1986), p. 10.

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newspapers, deluged as ever by letters denouncing the "Soviet capitalists," have begun publishing them. The authors of such letters often take it for granted that enormous savings and conspicuous private property are earned by illegal means. They propose the confiscation of the large bank deposits, cars and country houses of the wealthy, or suggest elaborate currency schemes whereby everyone could exchange only a limited amount of money and large sums be subdivided, whether they are deposited in banks or kept in private.

In May, 1986 Soviet government approved a resolution titled "On Greater Efforts Against Unearned Income," stipulating "greater state and public control over consumption" with the goal of "eradicating unearned income that has no place in the socialist system." Worded in the best traditions of egalitarian ideology, the resolution was intended to strike at excessive wealth, but in reality represented a notable setback for Gorbachev's reformist aspirations. The Soviet press described the effects of this resolution in the following words: "The country was inundated by a wave of absurdities"; "everywhere foodstuffs disappeared from the market with prices skyrocketing"; productivity fell "as if the people suddenly became lazier or less interested in their earnings."[12]

The following episode illustrates the typical consequences of the resolution. Like many other towns, Grozny, the capital of the tiny Chechen Autonomous Republic, suffered from a shortage of taxis. The state-employed taxi drivers fleeced their clients by charging exorbitant rates and refusing service to inconvenient addresses. In 1985 the local authorities tried "an experiment" in which car owners were allowed to offer their services as part-time taxi drivers, after the regular workday. The service improved immediately, as state drivers lost their monopoly and could no longer exploit their passengers. After the resolution, however, the minister of finance cancelled the experiment, using the old argument that such private economic activity intensified inequality, "making the rich even richer."[13] Yet the minister did nothing to confront the problem, neither improving public transportation nor ending the monopoly that enriched taxi drivers and local officials.

In fact, the majority of the newly rich in the Soviet Union have acquired their wealth by largely legal means. The enormous differences in the salaries of different social groups are determined by the state

12. *Literaturnaia gazeta* (October 15, 1988), p. 11.
13. *Literaturnaia gazeta* (July 23, 1986), p. 11.

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itself. For this reason no data are ever published on the salaries of party officials, the military, or factory managers. Moreover, access to special stores, restaurants, hospitals, and vacation resorts reserved for party officials, employees of the security organs, and certain categories of scientists have further contributed to massive inequality in the country. Because of ubiquitous shortages, the difference between official and open market prices on consumer goods and services, as well as medical care, becomes an important means of acquiring wealth.

Other groups that owe their privileges to a special position in the administrative mechanism include certain categories of workers who earn salaries disproportionate to their labor market status. In strategically important industries, such as mining, workers have exercised their right to change jobs as a weapon in the struggle for higher wages. The salary of a miner can be ten or twenty times that of an employee in education or public heath. The state monopoly on all cultural activities can also produce millionaires. A comedy approved and recommended by the Ministry of Culture will play in hundreds of theaters at once, bringing untold income to the fortunate author. Finally, until 1988 the Soviet Union remained the only industrialized country without progressive taxation: a monthly salary of 200 or 2000 roubles was taxed at the same rate of 13%. Only this year did Gorbachev's government announce the first steps toward progressive taxation.

In comparison to the economic inequality created by the state, the hidden economy remains an important secondary source of personal wealth. The concept of "unearned income" makes little sense in the world of the hidden economy, which functions by direct contracts between consumers and producers. These last earn more because they work harder and satisfy the real needs of the population. Exhorted by the May resolution to strike at "unearned income," the organs of state control were faced with a choice of target: either perfectly legal, albeit unearned, exorbitant incomes of bureaucrats, officials, and privileged workers; or formally illegal earnings of enterprising individuals who work at providing goods and services despite state injunctions. The choice of targets victims was predetermined: "the police set up roadblocks on the streets leading to the marketplaces," creating "greater chaos in the economy."[14]

In any case, the campaign against "unearned income", which struck first and foremost at the peasants and various small producers in the

14. *Literaturnaia gazeta* (October 15, 1986).

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towns, dealt a severe blow to Gorbachev's reformism. First, it demonstrated that Gorbachev's government was also susceptible to the demagogic aspects of the dominant ideology. Second, it revealed the limits of *glasnost* and permissible criticism. The May resolution was an obvious and grave error. Yet the press published no criticism of the new leadership responsible for the disaster.

In a recent article, the economist Nikolai Shmelev asked: "How can we justify the new press campaign against the personal plots of the peasants, which are so productive? How can we explain these pogroms of orchards, gardens, and small livestock operations that happened in the summer of 1986? Could it be that the pernicious effects of this campaign on the country and the state were not immediately noticed? Is it preferable to buy bread and meat from abroad and simultaneously suffocate the economic initiative of millions of our citizens for fear that some people might earn more than others?"[15] He defined this campaign as "Stalinism in action," but could not go so far as to personally criticize Gorbachev.

The most damaging aspect of this struggle against "unearned income" was the crumbling of the credibility and coherence of reformist policy. The idea that the state can one day change the rules and, instead of attacking unjust privileges, revert to attacking personal initiative can only heighten the insecurity of active and independent people, who will be more cautious and reluctant to express themselves through "individual economic activity." In turn, this adds to the enormous problems already facing the new law on individual economic activity, in force since May 1987.

It is still too early to analyze the effects of the law on individual economic activity, but both the slew of amendments added to it immediately upon passage and the thorny problems that arose from a partial legalization of private initiative illustrate the contradictory evolution of Soviet society. Originally, the scope of the law was quite limited — the result not only of antireformist resistance of bureaucracy but, more probably, the traditional postulates of Soviet ideology and the insecurities and prejudices of Gorbachev and his colleagues.

It formulated a principle according to which persons occupied full-time in the state economy had the right to individual economic activity. In this manner, Soviet citizens, with the exception of students and pensioners, could pursue individual activity only after work, whereas

15. N. Shmelev, "Avansy i dolgi," *Novyi mir* (1987), No. 6, p. 147.

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the hiring of salaried help by private enterpreneurs was strictly prohibited. The restrictive and counterproductive character of the law became evident almost immediately and, after only a few months, the government introduced important amendments. First, the new law adopted an important principle: citizens were no longer confined to legal activities enumerated in the law, but were permitted to pursue all activities not specifically prohibited; second, depending on the local manpower situation, local authorities were granted the right to permit private economic activity to citizens not employed by the state economy.

The importance of the new law to Gorbachev's leadership is obvious, as are the hopes of the people to improve their standard of living through private initiative. According to Soviet surveys, 40% of the population intend to take part in individual economic activity.[16] But there is also no doubt that opposition to the law will grow when, in the near future, the first consequences of widely-practiced private initiative become evident. Some managers have already voiced the concern that there could be a drain of skilled manpower from state enterprises to the private sector. Moreover, it should be expected that leaving control over private initiative in the hands of local authorities will result in even greater corruption. Finally, it is quite likely that any hopes of quickly assuaging the shortages of foodstuffs, consumer goods, and that services using the energies of small producers will be disappointed. What has already happened in Hungary could serve as an example, albeit negative, of such policies.

According to Hirschman, the consumer market is subdivided into two categories: price-sensitive and quality-sensitive consumers.[17] Hungarian enterpreneurs, stymied by various edicts limiting the volume of production, and unsure that the state would not abruptly reverse its lenient attitude toward private production, tried to realize the greatest profit in the shortest period of time. They produced high quality products aimed at the appropriately well-heeled customers. Hopes that the supply of consumer goods and services would grow, and that general product quality in the entire Hungarian economy would rise, proved largely illusory — instead there was a surge in inflation and economic inequality.[18] If this situation is repeated in the Soviet Unionl, the anti

16. *Strana i mir* (1987), No. 40, p. 40.

17. Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

18. P. Galasi, G. Kertesi, "Second Economy, Competition, Inflation," *Acta Oeconomica*, (1985), Vol. 35, Nos. 3-4.

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reformist position will be strengthened.

These are future concerns, whereas today *perestroika* runs the risk of becoming another paper campaign awash in rhetoric, as was the case with the democratization sabotaged by the apparatus and local authorities. Already we see symptoms of stalling in the reforms, due to internal political struggles. If the early mistakes of Gorbachev's policies could be explained by the fears and ideological limitations of his men, by their lack of experience and the weakness of reformist strategy, now the prevailing situation of reformism without reforms can only be due to the opposition of antireformist forces. Such forces are born of the passivity, fear, and apathy of the population; in turn, they reinforce such sentiments. Gorbachev's closest associates often speak of the "dangers" inherent in the compromises and half-measures of today. "If the hopes for the return of common sense are dashed once again," writes Shmelev, "the apathy of the population could become irreversible."[19] "The best strategy would be to completely restructure the socio-economic mechanism in a relatively short period: one, two, at most three years," declares Tatiana Zaslavskaya.[20] Another respected economist, Pavel Bunic, avers that "half-measures that at first built up the people's hopes now provoke only disappointment and protests."[21]

Sociologists provide Gorbachev with equally alarming counsel. Results of surveys on popular attitudes toward the goverment and political leaders remain unpublished. But recent data on the attitudes of young people toward Gorbachev's program are extremely revealing. The program approved by the 27th Party Congress stipulates the resolution of the housing problem in the USSR by the year 2000, but only 30% of those surveyed believe this promise. The same party program forecasts incomes increasing by 60-80% by the end of the century, but only 24% consider the Soviet economy capable of reaching this goal.[22] To this we must add the necessary drastic increase in food prices in a period when the economy is performing below expectation, although not as badly as the opponents of reforms had hoped.

The first three years of Gorbachev's rule have not brought about any concrete or irreversible restructuring. His main success lies in the fact that, thanks to *glasnost*, Soviet citizens now know that the *status quo* can

19. Shmelev, "Avansy i dolgi," *op. cit.*, p. 146.
20. *Izvestia* (April 21, 1987).
21. *Moskovskie novosti* (May 10, 1987).
22. I. Ilinskii, "Nas molodoi sovremennik," *Sotsiologiceskie issledovaniia* (1987), No.2, p. 20.

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no longer be maintained. The failure of the antireformist camp lies in its lack of any program that could diminish or even maintain, the technological gap between the US and the USSR. Reformists emphasize that "should *perestroika* be abandoned our defense capabilities will degenerate and the military balance of power will shift to the US as soon as 1988."[23]

In the first months of 1988 the most important development in internal party politics will be the selection of delegates to the All-Soviet Party Conference, which will have the mission of "examining the disagreement in the Central Committee."[24] The demotion of Yeltsin augurs ill for the reformers. But if Gorbachev continues to support reform, and if his group gains a strong majority, it could mean the end of political indecision and reformism without reform. Then structural changes could become the order of the day, at least in the economic sphere.

23. *Strana i mir* (1987), No. 40, p. 40.
24. *Ibid.*

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On the Genesis of Capitalism

Luciano Pellicani

The "Question" of Original Accumulation

Any consideration of the genesis of capitalism must start from Marx for two reasons: what Marx himself wrote on the subject; and the many accounts developed to explain the formation of modern market society either as alternatives to or elaborations of Marx' theory. Marx sees universal history as a succession of modes of production leading to the final goal: the conciliation of humanity with itself and with nature. The economy therefore explains the economy and everything else, since "religion, family, state, morality, science, art etc., are simply particular modes of production and fall under its general law"[1]; as such, they "have no history, no development."[2] Thus Marx has to locate the determinants of the origins of capitalism in the development of the mode of production prior to capitalism, i.e., in the contradictions of the feudal economy. In fact, for money to become capital, certain objective conditions must already be present, such as a mass of "free" workers, separate from the means of production, which money itself cannot create.[3]

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1. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1848*, edited by Dirk J. Struik (New York: International Publishers, 1982), p. 136.

2. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, Part I, edited by C. J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1972), p. 47.

3. In Marx's words: "The first glance shows what a nonsensical circle it would be if on the one hand the workers whom capital has put to work in order to posit itself as capital had first to be created, to be brought to life through its stockpiling if they waited for its command, Let There Be Workers!; while at the same time it were itself incapable of stockpiling without alien labor, could at the most stockpile its own labor, i. e., could itself exist in the form of not-capital and not-money; since labour, before the existence

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The aporia generated by this Marxian approach is evident: "the accumulation of capital presupposes . . . capitalistic production."[4] Marx tried to break out of the "vicious circle" by postulating ". . . primitive accumulation preceding capitalist accumulation; an accumulation not the result of the capitalist mode of production, but its starting point."[5] But this eliminates an aporia by means of a paradox: the violent intervention of a not-yet-bourgeois state which, by "expropriation and partial eviction of the country population"[6] creates "original accumulation" thus triggering the capitalist mechanism.

This solution is both surprising and unsatisfactory. It is surprising in that Marx, after writing at length that the "intimate arcanum and the hidden foundations of the specific form of the state" are to be found in the "direct relation between the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers,"[7] suddenly turns the state into an independent variable and assigns it the role of *deus ex machina*. It is unsatisfactory because, even if one concedes that political violence played the decisive role Marx claims it did, it remains a mystery why Oriental civilizations never managed to develop capitalism. In other words, there has always been "organized and concentrated violence" in all civilized societies but only in European society, according to Marx, did it generate the preconditions for industrial capitalism.

Apart from the fact that Marx is forced here to resort to an extra-economic variable — state violence — it still does not explain the dynamic of the European economy. If violent state intervention were the only necessary condition for the generation of the capitalist mode of production, "ancient Rome, Byzantium etc., would have ended their history with free labor and capital, or rather begun a new history."[8] The essential element is missing in Marx's explanation; there is no indication as to what makes the history of Western civilization *unique*.

That the economic dimension cannot explain the economic dimension is confirmed by Dobb's theory of the genesis of capitalism. His starting point is the criticism of Pirenne's view that the cumulative effects of the revival of international trade in Europe from the 12th century

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of capital, could only realize itself in forms such as craft labor, petty agriculture etc., in short, all forms which cannot stockpile, or only sparingly so. . ." Karl Marx, *Grundrisse,* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 506.

4. Karl Marx, *Capital,* Vol. 1 (New York: International Publishers, 1973), p. 713.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 713.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 751.
7. *Capital*, Vol. 3, p. 791.
8. Marx, *Grundrisse*, *op. cit.*, p. 506.

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and the parallel development of the market-city produced the gradual disintegration of the feudal economic structure. Dobb finds it "questionable . . . that the extension of the market can be seen as a sufficient condition for the decline of feudalism" and believes that the explanation is to be sought in the "solidity and intimate structure"[9] of the feudal mode of production, quite apart from exogenous factors which, albeit important, were certainly not decisive. Dobb has no doubt at all as to the validity of Marx' claim that economic society is moved by its own internal contradictions, and does not hesitate to undertake a real *tour de force*: to deduce the capitalist mode of production from the contradictions within the feudal mode of production. But Dobb cannot provide a plausible explanation for the flaws in the "intimate structure" of feudalism in terms of only economic variables. First of all, it is not possible to analyze the solidity of the economic structure of feudal society without also examining the solidity of the corresponding political regime. What characterizes feudal society is undoubtedly "the rigorous economic subjection of a host of humble folk to a few powerful men."[10] This subjection has a clearly political basis, so that the feudal system is a mode of government before being a mode of production.[11] Secondly, to explain, as Dobb does, the decline of feudalism in terms of its inefficiency means to acritically accept a providential vision of the development of productive forces.

If the inefficiency of a mode of production really resulted in the formation of a new and more rational mode of production, then it would be a mystery why the India of the Great Mogul, periodically devastated by shocking famines which induced the population to practice cannibalism,[12] did not generate a capitalist economy. It seems obvious that, in the long run, the most efficient economic forms end up swallowing less efficient ones, provided the state does not intervene to prevent it. But this presupposes at least two competing modes of production coexisting in the same social area. In other words, it presupposes that capitalism has already come into being.

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9. Maurice Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (London: Routledge & Sons, 1946), p. 60.

10. Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society,* Vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 443.

11. Marx himself made this argument but did not draw the logical conclusions: "In the feudal system the surplus labor for the nominal owner can be extracted *only* with extra-economic coercion." in *Capital,* Vol. 3, *op. cit.*, p. 790.

12. Cf. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, *The Mughal Empire,* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vindya Bhavan, 1984), pp. 734 ff.

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The vicious circle is so evident that even an orthodox Marxist like Sweezy found Dobb's account of the internal causation of the decline of feudalism totally unsatisfactory and accused Dobb of confusing as "immanent tendencies what were in fact historical developments which could only be explained by going back to causes outside the system."[13] Thus, following Pirenne, Sweezy sees long distance trade as one of the decisive external causes: it was "the creative force which gave birth to a system of production for exchange which coexisted with the ancient feudal system of production for consumption."[14]

Even though Sweezy quotes a passage from *Capital* stressing the role of international trade as the main determinant of the process of dissolution of feudalism,[15] his approach is not quite Marxist. To invoke, as he does, "causes which are external to the system" is tantamount to admitting that historical materialism, which insists on explaining the economic dimension by means of its own internal dynamics, cannot *explain* the genesis of capitalism; it can only *describe* the genetic process. Moreover, the issue will never be resolved by simply pointing to the decisive role of international trade. Since trade exists in all relatively complex and differentiated formations, what remains to be explained is what exactly it was in Europe — and only in Europe — that allowed trade to gradually eat away the traditional economic structures, i.e., what gave European trade this uncommon creative/destructive power.

The Weberian Myth of Calvinism

The exogenous variable to the economic feudal system that Sweezy sought could be cultural. Indeed, this was the answer both Sombart and Weber provided in explaining the transition from feudalism to capitalism. They sought those changes in attitudes toward life which they believed led to a break with the traditionalist spirit and the assertion of the modern (or rational) spirit. Moreover, they believed the essence of the rational spirit was a calculating mentality; the accounts must tally; social action must break with the rules and values of tradition and obey economic imperatives. Sombart and Weber thought it absurd to identify the spirit of modern capitalism with the drive to become

13. Paul Sweezy, "Comments," in *Monthly Review,* (February 1986).
14. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
15. "The circulation of commodities is the starting point of capital. The production of commodities, their circulation and that more developed form of their circulation called commerce, these form the historical ground-work from which it rises. The modern history of capital dates from the creation of the 16th century of a world-embracing commerce and a world-embracing market," in *Capital,* Vol. 1, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

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rich, for this has always existed in every civilization and did not necessarily lead to a reaction against economic inertia.

Here, however, they go their separate ways. While for Sombart heretical sects and, in particular, the Jews are the collective subjects which act as a vehicle of the new capitalist spirit, Weber believes that the Protestant sects and, in particular, the Calvinists, were the bearers of this new spirit. The difference may appear minor, but it is actually significant. Sombart believed that "heresy as such, quite apart from the actual religious denomination which in different moments of time may have been considered heretical,"[16] was the main seedbed of capitalist entrepreneurship. Excluded from public life, heretics could express their energy and satisfy their ambitions only in the economic sphere. Hence it is exclusion which is the sociological variable explaining the "decisive role"[17] of the Jews.

Weber developed a different argument: in his view, modern capitalism is regulated by purpose rationality and driven by an unmistakable *ethos*. That ascetic and rational ethos could only be born as an "historic precipitate" of a new conception of salvation capable of generating the "devotion to the calling of making money."[18] Without this "spiritual revolution," modern capitalism would not have been able to take on the shape it did after the 17th century. Weber could not be satisfied with Sombart's theory, which underestimates the ethical aspect of the capitalist revolution. His ideal type of entrepreneur is both rational and ascetic; i.e., a "calculator" intimately convinced that he has been "called" to fulfill a religious "duty." In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* Weber is obviously not advancing a theory on the genesis of capitalism. He is simply interpreting the specific character of capitalism in those areas where the Reformation had been particularly successful, becoming a *norma vitae* of the entrepreneurial class, increasing the "expansion of that attitude toward life which we have called the spirit of capitalism."[19] In short, Calvinism was an *accelerator* of capitalistic development, not its *generator*.

Weber is careful not to claim that capitalism is the product of the Reformation. The fact that certain forms of capitalist enterprises are notoriously much older than the Reformation kills that theory once and for all.

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16. Werner Sombart, *Il capitalismo moderno* (Turin: UTET, 1967), p. 273.
17. Werner Sombart, *Gli Ebrei e la vita economica* (Padua: AR, 1980), Vol. I, p. 211.
18. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribners and Sons, 1958), p. 72.
19. *Ibid.,* p. 172.

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What is important is to clarify to what extent religious influences play a role in the formation and expansion of that capitalist spirit. However, when Weber tried using the comparative method to single out the specific *difference* between Western civilization and Asian civilization, he abandoned the "weak" (or partial theory) for the "strong" theory which he formulated as follows: "The unrestricted lust for gain of the Asiatics in large and in small is notoriously unequalled in the rest of the world. However, it is precisely a 'drive for gain' pursued with every possible means including universal magic. It was lacking in precisely that which was decisive for the economics of the Occident: the refraction and rational immersion of the drive character of economic striving and its accompaniments in a system of rational, inner-worldly ethic of behavior, e.g., the 'inner-worldy asceticism' of Protestantism in the West. Asiatic religion could not supply the presuppositions of inner-wordly asceticism."[20]

Thus Protestantism is seen as the matrix of the mundane rational ethic which is in turn the determining causal factor allowing the West to break away from economic traditionalism and start along the road to capitalism. The theory, which in *The Protestant Ethic* had been defined as "crazily doctrinary," is now elevated to the point that it explains not only the "qualitative formation" and "quantitative expansion" of modern capitalism, but also its actual genesis. Of course, Weber's is a multifactor explanatory model, but the fact remains that, in what Talcott Parsons has called "the hierarchical order of factors,"[21] Weber ascribes a decisive role to the religious factor. This was an idealistic or at least a nonmaterialistic reading of the formation process of the modern market society. Even if we leave aside the strong theory and examine only the weak one, with Protestantism in all its sectarian articulations, there can be but one conclusion: Weber was looking for the historical determinants of the spirit of capitalism where there were none and where there never had been any chance of being any.[22]

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20. Max Weber, *The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhaism*, translated and edited by Hans. H. Gerth and Don Martindale (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1958), p. 337.

21. Talcott Parsons, *The Social System*, (New York: The Free Press, 1964).

22. The reason for this has been indicated by Werner Sombart: "Protestantism constitutes in the first place a severe and universal danger for capitalism and in particular for the economic mentality. Nor could it have been any other way. However one looks at it or evaluates it, capitalism is made up of elements that are worldly and profane, and therefore will always find many more followers, as man looks more to the joys of this earth and will always be hated and condemned by those men for whom life on earth is only a preparation for the next life. Every intensification of the religious sentiment

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Both capitalism and the capitalist spirit came long before the Reformation. This has been repeatedly pointed out, but needs to be reiterated because those who support Weber's theory believe it possible to assert that "the religious ideas (Calvinist) were formulated and spread *before* the spirit of capitalism found expression in the models of activity of the very first entrepreneurs."[23] There is no historical evidence of this. All historians of medieval economics agree that the spirit of capitalism was already present in the mercantile cities of the early Middle Ages.[24] Suffice to say here, that Federigo Melis, after carefully studying the papers of the Datimi Archive, concluded that those documents contained "the essence of capitalism: a) capital and, along with that, capitalists are praised; b) the profit motive is predominant; c) the juridical autonomy of the enterprise is evident; d) there is criticism of the separation of capital and labor; e) the strong individual personality is outlined; f) there is evidence of a quantitative concept of all business phenomena; g) it reflects economic rationalism."[25]

This should be more than enough to have strong doubts concerning the plausibility of Weber's theory. But there is more. There is the fact that the original spirit of the Reformation was so violently anti-capitalist

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must necessarily arouse a certain indifference for economic questions, and indifference before economic fortune means a weakening and a disintegration of the capitalist spirit. Since the movement of the Reformation undoubtedly intensified the inner life of man and strengthened his metaphysical needs, capitalist interests were at first to receive disproportionate damage from the diffusion of the Reformation. *Il burghese,* (Milan: Longanesi, 1978), p. 201.

23. Gianfranco Poggi, *Calvinism and the Capitalist Spirit* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1983). If things had been as Weber thought, we would have the paradox described by Fanfani, namely that the spirit of capitalism arose centuries after the formation of capital. See Amintore Fanfani, *Catholicism, Protestantism and Capitalism* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), pp. 183-194 and 196-209.

24. Here I limit myself to referring to works in which there is explicit recognition of a marked capitalist spirit in the *mercatores* of the early Middle Ages: Henri Pirenne, *Medieval Cities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974). p. 101; Lugo Brentano, *Le origini del capitalismo* (Florence: Sansoni, 1968), pp. 60-61; Amintore Fanfani, *Le origini dello spirito capitalistico in Italia* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1933), p 152; Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, its Transformations, and its Prospects* (New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961); Armando Sapori, *Studi di storia economica* (Florence: Sansoni, 1967), Vol. III, p. 39; Gino Luzzato, *Breve storia economica dell'Italia medievale* (Turin: Einaudi, 1982), p. 143; Yves Renouard, *Gli uomini d'affari italiani del Medio Evo* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1973), p. 135; Paolo Brezzi, *La civilità del Medio Evo europeo* (Milan: Europedes, 1978), Vol. I, pp. 432-433; 0. Nuccio, *Il pensiero economico italiano* (Sassari: Gallizzi, 1984), Vol. I, pp. 350 ff.; Jacques Le Goff, Les merchands e les banquires du Moyen Age (Paris: PUF, 1956), p. 41; and "La civilità urbana," in *Storia economia d'Europa*, edited by Carlo M. Cipolla (Turin: UTET, 1979), vol. I, p. 77.

25. Federigo Melis, *Aspetti della vita economica medievale* (Florence: Olschki, 1962), p. 353.

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as to induce Mumford to write that "religious Protestantism came not as an ally of capitalism but as its main enemy . . . . Rather than being the new credo of the rising bourgeoisie, it was an attempt to prevent the bourgeoisie from gaining influence . . . to subdue the commercial spirit and prevent it from conquering the church."[26] It is true that Weber himself hadadmitted that "no interior affinity with the capitalist spirit should be seen in Luther." The same should be said about the Calvinist ethic, which is imbibed in a medieval horror for Mammon which corrupts, degrades and prostitutes all. To realize this, all one has to do is read the following passage from Calvin's last lectures in Geneva: "In a well ordered republic, a man who practices usury is absolutely not to be tolerated . . . . Any man who practices usury as a profession is to be expelled from the company of other men. We must always bear in mind that it is difficult for a person who is making a profit not to wrong his brother. Hence the words usury, profit and interest should be completely banished from the memory of men."[27]

The truth is, that it is hard to imagine anything more antithetical to the spirit of capitalism than the Calvinist ethic. Calvin even forbade the creation of a bank and turned Geneva into a "militarized convent" or, to use Roenan's words, a "theocratic republic governed by the ministers (of the cult) in which the inquisition permeated all of life."[28] Nor could it have been any other way, since the Calvinist spirit, as Walzer has shown,[29] is very similar to the spirit of Jacobinism and Bolshevism and, as such, is radically hostile to bourgeois values.

Even a convinced supporter of the Weberian theory such as Troeltsch admitted the markedly anti-capitalistic nature of Calvin's preachings. Yet, by focusing on neo-Calvinism, he was able to conclude that Calvin was "the real generator and nourisher of the bourgeois and industrial capitalism of the middle class."[30] One could add, that the ample space

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26. Lewis Mumford, *The Condition of Man* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1944), p. 159.

27. Cited in André Biéler, *La pensée économique e sociale de Calvin*, (Geneva: Goerg, 1961), pp. 466 and 469. Biéler concludes his well-documented account of the Calvinist doctrine and praxis, writing that "it is not possible to honestly attribute to Calvin the responsibility for the evolution of capitalism *in its historical form*. This had not been able to develop among Protestant populations except thanks to a relaxation of the reformed doctrine and morals" (p. 514).

28. Ernest Renan, *Etudes d'histoire réligieuse* (Paris: Lévy, 1863), p. 347.

29. Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965); and "Puritanism as Revolutionary Ideology," in *The Protestant Ethic and Modernization*, edited by S. N. Eisenstadt (New York: Basic Books, 1968). Cf. also Eric Voegelin, *La Nuova Scienza Politica* (Turin: Borla, 1968) pp. 207-228.

30. Ernst Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 135.

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devoted to Richard Baxter's thinking in *The Protestant Ethic* is an indication that Weber emphasized neo-Calvinism in his theory. The problem is, however, that even the maxims of the *Christian Directory* do not contain the slightest traces of the capitalist spirit. Indeed, they seem to indicate that Puritanism in the second half of the 17th century was alien if not openly hostile to competitive and acquisitive individualism.[31]

Between the 17th and the 18th century Puritanism underwent a metamorphosis: it ceased being a collectivist anti-bourgeois movement and became "a vehicle for an almost utilitarian individualism."[32] But this is not an argument in support of Weber's theory. Quite the contrary: what happened was that Puritanism, like Catholicism in the Middle Ages, failed to crush that acquisitive spirit and, in the end, was forced to give in to the formidable power of capitalism. The result was that "the entrepreneurs who accepted Puritanism conducted their economic transactions according to the laws of the market place and not of religion, while in certain cases still trying to interpret those transactions before themselves and others as being compatible with the will of the Lord."[33]

The Megamachine

Thus the theories of Marx and Weber either lead down a blind alley or off the track. This reconstruction, however, has not been completely in vain. Without Marx and Weber even the terms of the problems would be different. Moreover, the works of Marx and Weber contain, almost hidden away, a hypothesis which throws light on the enigma surrounding the genesis of capitalism. It is a hypothesis which came up when Marx (and Weber) started along the route of historical comparison; i.e., when, instead of continuing to ask themselves what specific forces explain the birth of the rational bourgeois capitalism of the modern Western world they asked themselves why in all other forms of world civilization nothing similar to capitalism had ever appeared.[34] That is when they realized

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31. Cited in *Filosofia del lavoro*, edited by Antonio Negri (Milan: Marzorati, 1980), Vol. II, p. 440. One should recall that in the same year, the Puritan Richard Baxter published his *Christian Directory* (1673), and the Catholic Jacques Savary had his *Parfait négociant* printed, in which trade is praised as a "noble and useful profession," (Cited in H. Auser, *Les débuts du capitalisme* (Paris: Alcan, 1931), pp. 274-275.

32. R. H. Tawney, *La religione e la genesi del capitalismo*, in *Opere* (Turin: Utet, 1975), p. 471.

33. K. Samuelson, *Economia e religione* (Rome: Armando, 1973), p. 65. Identical is the thesis of Herbert Luthy, *Le passé présent* (Monaco: Rocher, 1965), p. 52, already sharply formulated in Hector M. Robertson, *Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1933), pp. 21 ff.

34. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, ed. by Lewis S. Feuer (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1959), p. 454 ff.

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that the answer to their question could only be found by analyzing the structure of public power.

On June 2, 1853, Marx wrote to Engels: "Bernier rightly considered the basis of all phenomena in the East — he refers to Turkey, Persia, Hindustan — to be the *absence of private property in land*. This is the real key, even to the Oriental heaven. . . ." On June 6, Engels responded: "The absence of private property is in fact the key to the whole Orient. Therein lies its political and religious history." He puts forward a brilliant ecological explanation of the phenomenon: "But why do Orientals never arrive at private property, even in its feudal form? I believe the answer lies primarily with climate, together with soil conditions, especially in the great stretches of desert which extend from the Sahara, through Arabia, Persia, India and Tartary, to the highest plateaus of Asia. Artificial irrigation is here the first condition of agriculture, and this is the responsibility either of communes, provinces, or the central government. In the Orient there have only been three departments of government: finance (plunder of the interior); war (plunder of the interior and the exterior) and public works, responsible for reproduction."[35]

In 1853, Marx and Engels made an extremely important socio-historical discovery, namely that the dominant economic system in the Orient — the only significant exception being Japan — should not be confused with either slave or feudal economy (both based on private ownership of land). What they baptized as the "Asiatic mode of production" was the material foundation for a *sui generis* social formation, characterized by the fact that the "*comprehensive unity* standing above all these little communities appears as the higher *proprietor* or as the *sole*

35. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 28 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1963), p. 259. Engels' explanation seemed convincing to Marx, who repeated it almost verbatim in his article on "The British Rule in India": "This prime necessity of an economical and common use of water, . . . necessitated in the Orient, where civilization was too low and the territorial extent too vast to call into life voluntary association, the interference of the centralizing power of government. Hence an economic function devolved upon all Asiatic government: the function of providing public works." Later, in a letter to Engels, he made the following remarks (which refer specifically to India, but which can be extended to other social formations in Asia): "What completely explains the stationary character of this part of Asia, despite all purposeless movements on the political surface, are two conditions which mutually support each other: 1) The public works obligation of the central government; and, 2) together with this, the whole empire, excluding the few large cities, divided into *villages* possessing a completely distinct orginization and constituting a world unto themselves. . . . I don't believe that one could conceive any stronger foundation for Asiatic despotism and stagnation." See respectively, Marx and Engels, *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, op.cit., p. 476; and Marx and Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 28, op.cit., pp. 267-268.

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proprietor; the real communities hence only as hereditary possessors."[36] This accounted for the specific form of extraction of the surplus product dominant in Oriental civilization: the bureaucratic-state formation.[37]

In the feudal system, the surplus product can be appropriated by extra-economic force. In the Asiatic mode of production, on the other hand, there is the emergence of a collective subject — something which is lacking in the other. It is the "global entrepreneur,"[38] able to control, in a situation of monopoly or near monopoly, the "sources of life." Consequently, Asiatic society does not have any freedom of movement before the state; it is as if locked within the bureaucratic structures of "general entrepreneur" and, for that reason, condemned to stagnation.

Marx and Engels do not say so explicitly, but it is obvious that it would literally have been a miracle if a society based on the Asiatic mode of production and governed by bureaucratic despotism had succeeded in accumulating capital: everything in that type of society is structured in such a way as to guarantee stability and the suffocation of every innovative force. Weber came to the same conclusion when he analyzed the political structure of the Chinese Empire.[39] But he had

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36. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, *op. cit.*, p. 472.

37. According to Marx, since "Amidst oriental despotism and the propertylessness which seems legally to exist there, this clan or communal property exists in fact as the foundation, created mostly by a culture within the small commune, which thus becomes altogether self-sustaining and contains all the conditions of reproduction and surplus production within itself. A part of their surplus labor belongs to the higher , which exists ultimately as a person , and this surplus labor takes the form of tribute etc., as well as of common labor for the exaltation of the unity, partly of the real despot, partly of the imagined clan-being, the god." *Ibid.*, p. 473.

38. Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, in *Opere Complete*, Vol. XXV, p. 172.

39. "It is important to recognize in principle that, contrary to our expectations, the pure patrimonial state organizations in the Orient did not follow an otherwise almost universal destiny. For rather than weakening traditionalism, the money economy, in effect, strengthened it. This was because the money economy, associated with prebends, created special profit opportunities for the dominant stratum. Generally it reinforced their rentier mentality and rendered paramount their interest in preserving those economic conditions so decisive for their own profit from prebends. With every advance of the money economy in Egypt, the Islamic states, and China, we observe the concomitant and increasing prebendalization of state income. There are short intermediary periods for the appropriation of prebends to be completed, but, in general, that phenomenon presents itself which we usually evaluate as "ossification" (*Erstarrung*). A general result of oriental patrimonialism with its pecuniary prebends was that, typically, only military conquest of the country, or successful military or religious revolutions could shatter the firm structure of prebendary interests, thus creating completely new power distributions and in turn new economic conditions. Any attempt at internal innovation, however, was wrecked by the aforementioned obstacles. Modern Europe, as noted, is a great historical exception to this because, above all, pacification of a unified empire was lacking. We may

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already thrown light on the existence of a negative causal correlation between the development of the centralising bureaucratic state and capitalist development when he wrote "The bureaucratic order of the monarchic regime, in blocking the minor sources of profit, gradually dried up the larger capitals . . . . The resulting stagnation and reflux of the process of formation of capital was generally accompanied by the tendency on the part of the state to guarantee that its own needs were satisfied by differentiating and gradually extending the circle of those who, thanks to their own possessions or professional qualifications, guaranteed their services to the public and were therefore both juridically and administrativley tied to their social function and patrimony. This phenomenon was eventually to lead to a domination of liturgies and of *munera*, to the destruction of all that which in classical society is called liberty and which in ancient States was typical of the so-called periods of decadence. The order, introduced by the monarch, which was so advantageous for the mass of its subjects, represents the *death of capitalist development* and of everything upon which it is founded."[40] In the same page Weber, formulates a crucial general law: "The periods in which society is saturated with order — which means economically stable — are those which show a vertical decline of capitalism," since the very *saturation of order* is obtained by a process of control, monopolization and bureaucratization which accompanies the "direct exclusion of private capital."

Thus both Marx and Weber succeed in singling out the one factor which made the historical parabola of Western society unique, the particular configuration of public power: a power almost always *limited* by both *laws* and widespread *counter-powers,* closely linked to private

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recall that, in the Warring States, the very stratum of state prebendaries who blocked administrative rationalization in the world empire were once its most powerful promoters. Then, the stimulus was gone. Just as competition for markets compelled the rationalization of private enterprise, so competition for political power compelled the rationalization of state economy and economic policy both in the Occident and in the China of the Warring States. In the private economy, cartellization weakens ration calculation which is the soul of capitalism; among states, power monopoly prostrates rational management in administration, finance, and economic policy. The impulse toward rationalization which existed while the Warring States were in competition was no longer contained in the world empire." Max Weber, *The Religion of China: Confucionism and Taoism*, translated and edited by Hans H. Gerth (Glencoe, ILL: The Free Press, 1951), pp. 61-62.

40. Max Weber, *Storia economica e sociale dell'antichità* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1981), pp. 35-36, (italics added).

41. Robert Boutruche, *Signoria e feudalesimo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1978), Vol. I, p. 224; Witold Kula, *Teoria economica del feudalesimo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1974), p. 6.

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property. But this discovery was obscured for decades by what Boutruche and Kula have called "universal feudalism."[41] It was only when Wittfogel published his now famous treatise[42] that the category of bureaucratic-managerial despotism was brought back from oblivion to theoretically differentiate between the typical forms of domination of Western civilization and those of Asia, Africa and pre-Columbian America.

Despotism, in its typical ideal form, is like what Mumford called a Megamachine,[43] i.e., a huge bureaucratic-managerial apparatus which operates both as a "war machine" and a "labor machine" and has the power to squash everything it finds in its path, or at least to prevent the formation of social forces able to challenge it, and even to place limitations on the arbitrary will of those controlling its formidable operating levers. This Megamachine combines the monopoly of violence, the monopoly of material production, and the monopoly of spiritual production. This means that despotism is a form of domination which has unified that which in Europe, has remained divided by reason of fortunate historical circumstance. The crucial distinction between *civil society* and *state* could not emerge in those countries subjected to the Megamachine. In those nations, society was imprisoned in what Weber called an "iron cage" and, as a result, was not able to develop autonomously. Thanks to the "political domination of the private economic mechanism,"[44] the executives of the apparatus were able to "saturate society with order" by controlling, supervising, arranging and guiding all, and thus nip in the bud any tendency which they saw as being dangerous for their power and their class privileges. Of course, they also protected society from external threats and guaranteed minimum conditions required for material reproduction through public works, but at the same time — and precisely to the extent to which they successfully impeded every form of private initiative — they prevented the shift from a static to a dynamic economy. In short, despotism is what caused economic rationality to be systematically sacrificed to political rationality.

The "First Engine": the Market City

What prevented Oriental civilizations from developing capitalism was bureaucratic and managerial despotism — a form of domination which in Western Europe was experienced only in the late Roman

42. Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957).

43. Lewis Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine, Technics and Human Development* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1967), p. 264.

44. S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires* (New York: The Free Press, 1963), p. 47.

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Empire.[45] What remains to be done is to single out what made possible the transition to a capitalist mode of production in Europe. To do so it is necessary to begin with a distinction between production for consumption and production for exchange. It should also be remembered that, while trade constitutes the prime example of an economy,"[46] trade existed in all Afro-Asian civilizations and did not generate capitalism.

In order to identify those processes which allowed trade to transform feudal society into a modern market society it is helpful to go back to Pirenne's theory, more recently articulated by Braudel with the well known formula: "In the West, capitalism and the city were basically the same thing."[47] Thus Venice's extraordinary success cannot be explained unless one bears in mind that it was the first city to adopt economic political institutions and the spirit typical of capitalism.[48]

But to say that the medieval city, through international trade "created the presuppositions of the industrial revolution of the 14th century,"[49] does not amount to an economic theory of the genesis of capitalism. Any attempt to explain economic reality by means of economic reality is destined to fail: it can only result in circular explanations. If the role of the cities, beginning with the Crusades, was a dynamic one, this is because the *political* characteristics of European cities were different from those of Oriental cities. There are two main factors here: the city and the state. The former seeks autonomy, while the latter seeks the extension of control over everything. In the Orient, cities were systematically defeated: "The *miracle* was that in the first important European urban centuries cities actually managed to come out on top at least in Italy, the Lowlands and in Germany. For a fairly long period the cities were able to enjoy a complete and autonomous existence. This is a major event and even now its genesis remains not yet fully understood. But

45. M. Rostovzev, *Storia economica e social dell'Empires* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1976), pp. 532 ff.

46. Brentano, *Le origini del capitalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

47. Ferdinand Braudel, *Le strutture del quotidiano* (Turin: Einaudi, 1982), p. 480. Jacques Le Goff argues the same point: "In the beginning there were the cities" in *Gli intellettuali del Medio Evo* (Milan: Mondadori, 1979), p. 7. But Adam Smith had already located in medieval cities, in particular Italian cities, the first motor of capitalist development An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of *THE WEALTH OF NATIONS*, edited, with an Introduction, Notes, Marginal Summary and an Enlarged Index by Edwin Canaan (NewYork: The Modern Library, 1937), pp. 377-378.

48. Cf. G. Luzzatto, *Storia economica di Venezia*, (Venice: Centro Internazionale delle Arti e dei Costumi, 1961).

49. Carlo M. Cipolla, *Storia economica dell'Europa pre-industriale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1975), p. 199.

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the enormous consequences thereof are visible."[50] One such consequence is Europe's break away from a feudal economy.

Concerning this *political* "miracle," both Marx and Weber have written truly enlightening passages. In the *Grundrisse*, the specific difference between Oriental and ancient cities, on the one hand, and medieval cities, on the other, is described in terms that are extremely precise: "The history of classical antiquity is the history of cities, but of cities founded on landed property and on agriculture; Asiatic history is a kind of indifferent unity of town and countryside (the really large cities must be regarded here merely as royal camps, as works of artifice [*Superfötation*] erected over the economic construction proper); the Middle Ages (Germanic period) begins with the land as the seat of history, whose further development then moves forward in the contradiction between town and countryside; the modern [age] is the urbanization of the countryside, not ruralization of the city as in antiquity."[51]

The reason that this was not possible in societies based on the Asiatic mode of production is because there was no conflict between the city and the country — a conflict which for Marx can only exist "within the context of private property"[52] — and no urbanization of the countryside because "the communal conditions of real appropriation through labor, aqueducts, very important among Asiatic peoples, means of communication etc., then appear as the work of the higher unity of the despotic regime hovering over the little communes. Cities proper here form alongside these villages only at exceptionally good points for external trade; or where the head of the state and his satraps exchange their revenue (surplus product) for labor. . . "[53] In short, the Oriental city was simply the court residence of the regime and its executives. For this reason, it did not belong to the merchants and artisans over whom it extended the "invisible hand" of central political power.[54]

Weber's typology of the city is more detailed, but identical in substance: "Cities on the Mediterranean coasts developed in the opposite direction to the situation in Asia. . . . There, the need to control the rivers and the need to have an irrigation policy led in the Middle East (and also in Egypt) . . . to a state bureaucracy. In the beginning it was

50. Ferdinand Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life 1400-1800*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 398.
51. Marx, *Grundrisse*, *op. cit.*, p. 479.
52. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
53. Marx *Grundrisse*, *op. cit.*, p. 473.
54. See Etienne Balasz, *La burocrazia celeste*, (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1971), pp. 154-63.

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only a bureaucracy for the purposes of construction, but then this initial form of bureaucracy led to a bureaucratization of the whole administration. It enabled the sovereign to place the administration of the army under his own bureaucratic government, aided by the personnel and earnings which this procured for him: the officer and the soldier, i.e., the army, recruited, equipped and fed from the stores, became the basis for military power. As a consequence, the soldier is separated from military means and the subject is powerless militarily. On this terrain there was no way that any political community that was independent of the power of the sovereign, could ever develop in the towns; for the citizen was not a soldier." "Things were quite different in the Occident," continues Weber, "where up to the time of the Roman emperors the principle of *self-equipment* of the armies prevailed, whether these were peasants, levies, knightly armies, or burger militias. But this signified the military *autonomy* of the individual obligated to military service. The position of King Clovis *vis à vis* his military following illustrates a principle which is basic for all self equipped armies: that the lord is to a very large extent dependent on the good will of the soldiers whose obedience is the sole basis of his political power. He is more powerful than any one of them and also stronger than small groups, but any larger association of his military men against him leaves him quite powerless. In this political structure the lord lacks the bureaucratic apparatus — an instrument of compulsion which is blindly obedient because of its complete dependence; if the strata on whom his rule is based coalesce against him, he cannot have his way unless he comes to terms with the militarily and economically independent *honoratiores* who staff his administrative positions and supply his dignitaries and local officials."[55]

The absence of the Megamachine explains why the development of Western cities was totally different from that of Eastern cities. In fact, the "Occidental city — and especially the medieval city . . . — was not only economically a seat of trade and craft, politically in the normal case a fortress and perhaps a garrison, administratively a court district, but beyond all this also a sworn confraternity."[56] It was this which in Europe enabled the city, thanks to its *autonomy*, to "usurp the right of rupture of the lords" and gradually disintegrate the feudal order. Thus it was a doubly "revolutionary" situation: politically the city represented an independent

55. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley, LKos Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978), Vol. II, p. 1261.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 1248.

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counter-power to the barons and the clerics; economically, it was "if not necessarily a marketplace, on all occasions a place of trade"[57] and therefore an *enclave* in the dominant economy.

Poston has rightly defined medieval cities as "non-feudal islands in feudal seas"[58] because of their peculiar political regime based on self-government and individual freedom. It was a "democracy of the privileged."[59] Nevertheless, it represented something markedly antithetic to feudal society. "City air makes you free" was a popular German saying in the early Middle Ages. In effect, "the most essential requirement of city society was freedom. Without freedom or, rather, without the right to move about freely, to dispose of one's self and one's goods, all things which slavery does not allow, it was impossible to engage in trade."[60] And it was trade which set the tone of economic life in medieval communes and then turned those communes into a driving force not only of the commercial, but also of the industrial revolution. The communes were the cradle of mercantile capitalism with all its typical institutions, from bills to banks, from double entries to limited partnership companies.

Nor can it be said, with Sombart, that trade in the early Middle Ages was a minor affair and that the *mercatores* were dominated by a narrow spirit.[61] The dominant mode of production continued to be feudal and hostile to change; "protected" and legitimated by the Church which condemned usury and trade, demonised as the perverse agents of Mammon.[62] Yet the dynamic force of the politico-economic revolution, sparked and fed by the market city, was such that the tripartite society of the *moratores*, the *bellatores*, and the *laboratores* had to make way for a "strong mercantile aristocracy,"[63] which created what amounted to real colonial empires that extended all over the Mediterranean area; empires with which the proto-bourgeoisie was able to challenge, often successfully, the powers, values and practices of the feudal world.

The result was that during all the early Middle Ages the "cities and

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57. Henri Pirenne, *Les villes et les institutions urbaines*, (Paris: Alcan, 1939), p. 55.

58. Michael Postan, "The Trade of Medieval Europe: the North" in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe* (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), Vol. II, p. 202.

59. Pirenne, *Les villes et les intitutions urbaines*, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

60. Henri Pirenne, *Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe*, (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1937), p. 50.

61. For a criticism of Sombart's thesis, see G. Luzzatto, *Dai servi della gleba agli albori del capitalismo* (Bari: Laterza, 1966), pp. 485 ff. and, A. Sapori, *Studi di storia economica* (Florence: Sansoni, 1955), Vol. I, pp. 622 ff.

62. The best exposition that I know of economic petronology of the church is that of O. Nuccio, *Il pensiero economico italiano*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 369 ff.

63. G. Volpe, *Il Medio Evo* (Florence: Sansoni, 1978), p. 185.

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the feudal world were openly opposed to each other."[64] They are two worlds governed by totally irreconcilable principles: the world of competitive and acquisitive individualism, of secularized culture, of market economies and democracy, on the one hand, and the world of the Church, of the feudal lords, of religious orthodoxy and autarchic economies on the other. Thus the "life of a medieval city was a succession of hard battles to conquer liberty and to maintain it, . . . while the great number had to fight fifty or a hundred years in succession, often more, before their right to a free life had been recognized, and another hundred years to found their liberty on a firm basis."[65]

During this period a typical phenomenon of free societies began to emerge: permanent internal conflict. The medieval cities are fortified market places in which everything takes on the flavor of a fight. As in the ancient Greek *polis* and in republican Rome, there is constant conflict between the exploiters and the exploited, the rich and the poor, between those who have gained full citizenship and those who are excluded from it and aspire to obtain it.

The Solution to the Enigma: Political Polycentrism

What this analysis suggests is the following hypothesis: *the solution to the enigma of the origins of capitalism is to be found in the particular structure of the feudal system*. The transition was sparked by the prodigious development of long-distance trade. Yet the entire process would never have begun if the mercantile and manufacturing towns had not succeeded in winning their battle for political autonomy. This victory was possible because the feudal state was structurally weak, with no bureaucratic apparatus, no solid financial foundations, no army capable of rendering the cities powerless and extirpating claims to self-government.[66]

If we look at the feudal world, we cannot but be struck by the "*dismemberment* of public power and the *pulverization* of the local dominations substituting the centralized state"; thus it can be said that "feudalism is *anarchy* which has spread through society."[67] The lord is still in complete

64. P. Jones, *La storia economica* in *Storia d'Italia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1974), Vol. II, p. 1539.

65. Peter A. Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (New York: Knopf, 1918), p. 176.

66. Of decisive importance was the almost permanent conflict between the Papacy and the Empire — a conflict which greatly weakened the latter. See R. S. Lopez, *La nascita dell'Europa* (Turin: Einaudi, 1984), E. Ennen, *Storia della città medievale*, (Bari: Laterza, 1978), p. 113, and K. Bosl, *L'Europa medievale* (Turin: UTET, 1983), p. 1664.

67. R. Boutruche, *Signoria e feudalesimo*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 30. In northern Italy the pulverization of sovereignty was intensified by the fact that the law whereby estate and title pass to the eldest son had never been in force. This explains why the first commercial

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possession of his fief, but precisely because he has such undivided power, the political authority of the system is never located in one center. This explains the state of permanent war which characterized the feudal world: it is a military society in the strongest sense of the word, since "war is not restricted to a border zone but is *widespread*."[68]

Within such a polycentrically structured political system, the formation of new centers of power — the communes — able to successfully challenge the weak central authority was relatively easy. In the market city the bourgeoisie reconstructed society, taxed itself, chose its judges, created the armies with which to conquer the feudal lords and even the emperor, and established governments functional to the development of mercantile activities and laws which protected private property. In short, they created those institutions which were to triumph from the Industrial Revolution on and were later exported to the rest of the world through colonialism.

The conclusion is obvious: the medieval market cities were able to inject elements of rationality and dynamism into the stagnant feudal world only insofar as they were able to gain complete political autonomy. Hence Jean Baechler could write that the "*expansion of capitalism has its origin and its reason for being in feudal anarchy*."[69] This is simply the explicit formulation of what could be called the "hidden hypothesis" implicit in the works of both Marx and Weber, describing how and why despotism blocked Oriental societies, imprisoning them within the rigid structures of the bureaucratic apparatus and preventing them from experimenting with forms of exchange, techniques of production and political institutions which allowed Europe to spontaneously create capitalism and, with it, modern industrial civilization.

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cities came into being between the Tiber and the Alps. On the other hand, in southern Italy the centralizing feudalism of the Normans destroyed the autonomy of the cities and blocked capitalist development right from the start. See G. Galasso, *Potere e istituzioni in Italia*, (Turin: Einaudi, 1974), pp. 46 ff. For the same reason, Japan, while having a feudal political system, was never successful in endogenously generating capitalism: the power of *daimyo* was such as to prevent the formation of autonomous market cities, above all in the 17th century when the Togukawa held "the country literally immobile in isolation." See J. Whitney Hall, *L'Impero giapponese* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1969), p. 169.

68. P. Contamine, *la guerre au Moyen Age*, (Paris: PUF, 1980), p. 481.

69. J. Baechler, *Les origines du capitalisme*, (Parigi: Gallimard, 1970), p. 126. The same conclusions have been reached independently by E. L. Jones, *Il miracolo europeo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1984) and R. H. Zorilla, *Origen y formacion de la sociedad moderna* (Buenos Aires: El Ateneo, 1984).

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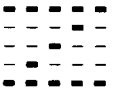

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*Marcuse's Political Theory in the 1940s and 1950s**

Alfons Söllner

In 1940 Marcuse wrote: "Under the terror that now threatens the world the ideal constricts itself to one single and at the same time common issue. Faced with fascist barbarism, everyone knows what freedom means. . ."[1] The writings of other German refugees in the early 1940s are full of similar pronouncements. They are characteristic of the darkest years of the 20th century, when Hitler's armies marched on the Soviet Union, and it seemed for a moment that the delusion of a German empire would become reality. Ten years earlier, under the influence of Heidegger, Marcuse might have taken the desperate resolve echoed in these lines as philosophical decisionism. But in 1941 they stood for almost the exact opposite — willingness to engage in the lengthy and difficult task to overcome National Socialism.

The demand to take the Marxian concept of mediating theory and practice at face value is implicit in Marcuse's writings, but nowhere is it more urgently explicit than in *Reason and Revolution*. In this book, his first in America and his second on Hegel, Marcuse sought to demonstrate the incompatibility of Hegelian philosophy with the goals of National Socialism. His evidence was conclusive, and his argument made the gap between his American and Weimar interpretations of Hegel as plain as his intention to show an American public the anti-fascist potential of the German tradition. The result was a puzzling insight into the

* Translated from German by David Berger, Capers Rubin and G. L. Ulmen.

1. Herbert Marcuse, "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, Vol. IX (1941), No. 3, pp. 435 ff.

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ambivalence of Hegel's political thought. His concrete historical interpretation brought out its progressive implications more clearly than its (undenied) authoritarian aspirations. Marcuse even went so far as to call Hegel's thought a genuine expression of liberalism.[2] However, the context of the Institute of Social Research also came through in this reconstruction insofar as it was directed at clarifying the basic rupture which marked the transition from Hegel to Marx in the history of philosophy: "The final culmination of philosophy is thus at the same time its abdication. Released from its preoccupation with the ideal, philosophy is also released from its opposition to reality. This means that it ceases to be philosophy. It does not follow, however, that thought must then comply with the existing order. Critical thinking does not cease, but assumes a new form. The efforts of reason devolve upon social theory and social practice."[3] In so formulating the general program of the Horkheimer circle, Marcuse may not have guessed what a literal meaning it would soon take on for him. Still, looking back on these words, they testify to the group's wish to present their philosophical and historical studies as immediately related to the times in which they lived. Marcuse himself took another step toward his future in the foreword to *Reason and Revolution*, where he ascribed views to Hegel which would shortly govern his own actions: "He attributed to the American rational spirit a decisive role in the struggle for an adequate order of life, and spoke of the victory of some future and intensely vital rationality of the American nation . . . ."[4]

In the decade that followed, 1942 to 1952, Marcuse published nothing except a critique of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*.[5] To argue that it was one of Marcuse's most interesting periods may be irritating, but this was a time when philosophy had to abdicate, to renounce its opposition to reality. In the spring of 1943, Marcuse left the new home of the Institute at Columbia University in New York for service at the State Department in Washington. Whether he made this move voluntarily, or whether it was forced on him by the dim professional prospects so typical of immigrant life, the important thing is that he did. The step came out of a philosophical radicality unprecedented in the narrower circle of the Frankfurt School. The situation in which it placed Marcuse

2. Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*, 1941 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), pp. 174 ff.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
4. *Ibid.*, p. xv.
5. Herbert Marcuse, "Sartre's Existentialism," in Marcuse, *Studies in Critical Philosophy*, Translated by Joris De Bres (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), pp. 159-190.

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was ironic all the same. None expressed this more aptly than another refugee, Hans J. Morgenthau, who introduced Marcuse at a conference on "Germany and the Future of Europe" as follows: "This is one of the cases when a philospher has not become a king, but has perhaps achieved the even rarer accomplishment of becoming the Chief of the Central European Branch, Division of Research, of the Department of State. I don't know whether any philosopher ever had such a title."[6]

It already says a lot about Marcuse's personal experiences in the State Department that, at the end of his life, he was no longer willing to go into the Washington years with any precision.[7] Most likely the period's psychological costs seemed too high, and its political gains subsequently seemed too low. Nonetheless, its objective preconditions are worth looking into, because they characterize a segment of contemporary history which framed an instructive episode of the American struggle against fascism. The notable thing about the episode was not, of course, its unqualified success, but rather the opposite: the experience of immediate and escalating contradiction between the means and ends of the struggle itself. The conditions of immigration themselves proved to be the decisive obstacle in mediating satisfactorily between theory and practice. For Marcuse, at least, this became one of the factors which led him to renew and strengthen his concern with philosophy, i.e., the very position he had wished to abandon. Taken abstractly, this formulation sounds like a vicious circle, and in fact it does capture a certain aspect of the political exile period. But it is precisely Marcuse who became a paradigm of how, under changed conditions, the circle could be broken and the "force of negation" once more restored.

The institutional and political conditions of Marcuse's years in Washington were created by the newly formed Office of Strategic Services (OSS), more specifically its Research and Analysis Branch. With America's active entry into the war in 1942, a group of German immigrants were hired. Besides Marcuse, there were two more members of Horkheimer's Institute: the constitutional expert, Otto Kirchheimer, and the trade union lawyer, Franz L. Neumann, who had just published a voluminous work on National Socialism.[8] The future international

6. Hans J. Morgenthau, *Germany and the Future of Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), p. 173.

7. I attempted in the fall of 1978 in La Jolla, California, and the summer of 1979 in Starnberg, to engage Marcuse in conversation about his work in Washington but he declined.

8. Franz L. Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942).

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affairs expert, John Herz, the historian, Felix Gilbert, the ex-Prussian ministerial officials, Oskar Weigert and Robert Eisenberg, the Austrians, Robert Neumann and Henry Kellerman, and several other freelance collaborators came on board later.

The Americans' purpose in placing "enemy aliens," which some of them still were, in such a high-risk security situation was clear. The US government needed experts who could evaluate the enemy's situation and resources. There was no better move than to pick men who combined a strong anti-fascist political orientation with a high degree of professional expertise about the conditions of the Weimar Republic and the rise of the Hitler regime. To understand this particular fusion of theory and practice, it is important to remember that it involved a dependent political work-relation, but one that could not rule out the immigrants' indirect pursuit of their own goals through research and consultation. They would try to influence American postwar policy on Germany by the construction and scholarly justification of a specific image of their native land.

After the US entered the war, there was secret-service work in the narrow sense — espionage and evaluation of the social and political forces and resources of Hitler's Germany.[9] With the end of the war on the horizon, the question of occupation and disciplinary measures emerged. When the research group was transferred to the State Department at the end of 1945, the last phase began. This was the partly constructive, partly critical follow-up of a rebuilding process which from the outset and with greater clarity from 1947 included the acceptance of the division of Germany and aimed at the reestablishment of a capitalist democracy in the western half. Given this course of events, conflict between the German immigrants and their employers was inevitable.

The differences were explicitly political, and their scope can be gauged in view of the fact that at least the group's leading trio — Neumann, Marcuse, and Kirchheimer — came out of the Institute for Social Research and were working toward democratic socialism in Germany. Their vision was of a third way between communism and socialism, one which to them looked like the only guarantee of a reliably stabilized democracy for Germany's future. But the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan in the spring of 1947 broadened US policy on Germany to a European and finally a geopolitical

9. *Zur Archäologie der Demokratie in Deutschland: Analysen von politischen Emigranten im amerikanischen Staatsdienst*, Edited by Alfons Söllner, Two vols. (Frankfurt a/M: Fischer Verlag, 1986).

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strategy intended both to hold back the tide of communism and to shore up the Western Alliance. Securing capitalist markets and building up military blocks took the fore.[10] Correspondingly, the issues which concerned even the less radical members of the research group were pushed into the background: a consistently-executed program of denazification, a democratic re-education process which would thoroughly penetrate political life, and the transfer of future affairs of state to a bureaucracy free from Nazi ties that could be trusted to uphold democracy. If these goals were the minimum required by the immigrants for cooperation with the government, then their attempt at political intervention in US policy can only be evaluated one way — it was a failure.

As for Marcuse's activity in all this, it is well established that he exerted an enormous influence in discussion and theory formation. Eugene N. Anderson, the first American director, places Marcuse second only to Neumann, the formal head of research and the intellectual opinion-leader of the group. That Marcuse took over Neumann's post after his departure from the State Department in 1947 also speaks for his importance. Both by Marcuse's account and the documents,[11] his work was largely concentrated in two policy areas. One was the preparation and critical follow-up of denazification in Germany, including the preparation of lists of particularly implicated persons; the other, the identification and investigation of groups which could join positively in the democratic reconstruction, primarily the Social Democrats and the trade unions. The work process was collaborative, so even though research reports were assigned to individuals, the team as a whole went over them. Because of this, any single report can only be indirectly attributed to an individual author. Still, what seems at first a problem for a theoretical biography of Marcuse, actually throws a particularly interesting light on the collaborative study process, which itself turned out to be decisive for his development.

The OSS denazification reports, for which Marcuse was responsible,[12]

10. John Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany: Politics and the Military, 1945-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968); Thomas S. Paterson, *Soviet-American Confrontation* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), pp. 235 ff.

11. Jürgen Habermas, Sylvia Bovensthen, et al., *Gespräche mit Herbert Marcuse* (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978), pp. 20 ff. Most of this short book has appeared in English in *Telos* 38 (Winter 1978-79), pp. 124-153: Herbert Marcuse, Jürgen Habermas, Heinz Lubasz and Tilman Spengler, "Theory and Politics: A Discussion." Cf. *Zur Archäologie der Demokratie in Deutschland*, *op.cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 12.

12. *Zur Archäologie der Demokratie in Deutschland*, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 153 ff.

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demonstrate what a united front there was among German anti-fascists and American politicians up to 1945. Neumann had built his analysis of National Socialism on an unorthodox Marxist theory. According to him, there were strong elements of a planned economy in Germany, though the profit motive and private capital were still the dominant forces. This structural economic theory was supplemented by a theory of the rule of the totalitarian elite. In 1944 Neumann put it this way: "Increasingly, a small group of powerful industrial, financial and agricultural monopolists coalesced with a group of high-level party functionaries into a single block, which controlled the means of production and the tools of power."[13] The OSS denazification plans were modeled to the letter on this view. The most tainted were people occupying positions from the upper echelons of the party to the state ruling elite, but ordinary party members and, above all, private business leaders were also named. This method of selection is particularly revealing when compared with the one used in the actual denazification process between 1945 and 1948. The criteria actually applied were quantitative and resulted, by mid-1946 alone, in labeling 1.5 million Germans with the infamous question mark. The OSS plan, which was qualitative and based on a theory of power, would have kept the final tally of tainted people as low as possible. This might have forestalled the generally lamented failure of denazification measures: the bureaucratic overloading that forced ever more widespread amnesties once lower level party members had been judged, and worked to the advantage of the most heavily "tainted." It is symptomatic that the number of people rated as tainted in the denazification process as a whole was about the same as what the OSS had estimated for the initial stage (approximately 200,000).[14]

The "denazification fiasco," as one member of the Central European Section called it, was probably the greatest failure of the democratic reconstruction of postwar Germany. A 1948 report thematized the perverse transformation of the process into the very opposite of what the OSS planners had intended.[15] Since denazification was carried out by the Germans themselves, they were able to turn the American plan, which was extravagant and lax anyway, into a kind of rehabilitation mechanism for mid and low level Nazi functionaries. The continuity this brought about soon proved to be a heavy burden for the future West

13. *Ibid.*, p. 661.
14. Conrad F. Latour and Thilo Vogelsang, *Okkupation und Wiederaufbau* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1973), p. 144.
15. *Zur Archäologie der Demokratie in Deutschland*, *op.cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 217 ff.

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Germany. Not only did the new democracy incorporate the highly compromised economic elite but also a good part of the bureaucracy and especially the judiciary that had served Hitler inconspicuously but effectively. It is enough to cite Herz' recollections: "You must make this distinction: at the outset we were somehow possessed by the notion that we could do something. After all, it was a matter of world-historical significance to destroy fascism and defend the democratic system. . . . I felt the moral obligation, especially as an immigrant accepted by the United States, to do something to prevent the world hegemony of fascism. Of course, little by little we became disillusioned . . . people, that is, the decision makers in the other sections of the State Department, simply threw them into the wastebasket. We never received any reactions, never had the feeling that any notice was taken of what we had recommended or warned against. Already in 1945 it was hinted that Germany should be built up as quickly as possible, and this line was pushed through in 1946-47. To sum up the experiences after 1945: we immigrants were all so disappointed over our lack of influence, our inability to effect policy, that one by one we came to the conclusion that we had nothing more to look for there."[16]

Resigned formulations like these make palpable the basic mood of the Research Section from at least 1947. Neumann left in '47; Herz in '48, with most of the other immigrants dispersing to university teaching and research soon after. Marcuse stayed on another five years; whether voluntarily or because he had nothing better in view is moot. The important thing is that he continued to try to influence policy. The story of the second area where he took a lead — identification and support of pro-democratic political groups in Germany — tells more about the work and the strategic twists and turns involved in it. By contrast with the negative goals of American occupation policy — the three D's of demilitarization, denazification and decentralization — here the US government was seeking a positive orientation.

The most striking thing about the reports on pro-democratic groups which the Central European Section produced around 1945[17] was the almost exclusive attention paid to the political Left and the trade unions. The immigrants apparently had two things in mind. They wanted the Weimar structures to be picked up again, in part to steer things toward the establishment of a democracy. But they hoped still more to secure an advantage for the political organizations of the labor

16. *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 43-45.
17. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 203 ff; Vol. 2, pp. 121 ff.

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movement in order to assure their interests and institutional place in the future state. Clearly, the OSS planners took a partisan view of the remnants of the movement, though they had never been unrealistic enough to believe that the workers could have rebelled against Hitler. Just as clearly, they went a step beyond the neutral, Western-style theory of democracy which the advocates of *Realpolitik* in the US pushed through after 1947. They tried to avoid ideological anti-communism and keep alive the possibility of a third way between the American model of democracy and a strict communist policy (which, they had no doubt, would be directed by Moscow). Constitutionality and political pluralism were merely the obvious and assumed conditions for neutralizing the Nazi power elite, but they did not seem enough to guarantee a positive democratic development.

The German immigrants working for the US government, or more specifically, those who constituted Marcuse's intellectual milieu, viewed the political situation in their native land with flexibility, realism and pragmatism. An example of this, and one which was highly significant for the development of Marcuse's political thinking, is the change in political perspectives on the development of parties in West Germany toward the end of the 1940s.[18] The 1945 studies were still aimed at giving leftist parties and trade unions the freest possible hand in the reconstruction of German democracy. The studies from 1948-49 push toward the opposite political conclusions. Having demonstrated the extent to which new-born bourgeois political groups had put the left on the defensive, the studies demanded that the occupation forces should not leave Germany prematurely. This was not so much for fear of a communist takeover, but out of concern that a new German nationalism, fomented by rightist parties and encouraged by the international situation, would arise and destroy everything that had been achieved in the way of democratic consolidation.

It is not easy to find an explicit, clearly formulated political theory in the reports the immigrants produced for the OSS and later the State Department. Mostly they were just situational reports or immediate strategic analyses. But it does appear that simply securing constitutional and formal democratic institutions grew more important the more traditional class and power structures seemed to be reconsolidating. This defensive attitude, rather than the aggressive pursuit of democratic socialism, is what Herz had in mind when he recalled the basic consensus of

18. *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 251 ff.

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the group: "It pursued a liberal-democratic perspective and belief in the possibility of being able to create a democratic Germany beyond agrarianism, but also beyond Western capitalism — a Germany with a democratic constitution which would keep all options open. At first there would be no socialism, but the creation of a basis from which everything would follow; perhaps even a democratic socialism. I believe that this was also the approach of . . . Neumann, Marcuse, and Kirchheimer. I want to stress that they stood for a reformist, democratic socialism, not so much for a Marxist position, that their intention was to create for Germany a democratic constitution in the broader sense, which would first of all eliminate the authoritarian, illiberal tradition on all levels. It was an approach which I, as a non-Marxist, could agree with — a kind of Anglo-Saxon democracy out of which, given the proper conditions, even socialist measures could develop."[19] This picture of Marcuse as the proponent of Anglo-Saxon democratic constitutionalism or Social-Democratic reform seems to clash with every familiar image of him and his politics — the radical thinker of Weimar, the intellectual precursor of the student movement, the vehement critic of Social Democratic quietism who grasped the repressive tolerance inherent in American liberalism and its paralyzing of every radical opposition. Certainly the estimate of Marcuse as a social democratic reformer contradicts New Left dogma about him,[20] — dogma which is already suspect for having been accepted so wholeheartedly by the very opponents of the New Left. One of the (not insignificant) features of the stereotypical view of Marcuse is that it simply turns a blind eye on the middle phase of his career, the only time in which he was part of an institutional political context. Yet this is the most fruitful period for a historical and concrete study of the maxim Marcuse followed in all stages of his theoretical work: the mediation of theory and practice. This maxim is the key to understanding the continuity of a thinker whose lifework unified impulses which could hardly be more contradictory — German existentialism and psychoanalysis, the Hegelian-Marxist tradition, and the new sensuality of the American hippies. The status and direction of Marcuse's political thought in the 1940s may reveal traits in his work as a whole which have gone unnoticed until now.

A lecture delivered by Marcuse in 1950 runs counter to any reductionist, political or psychological interpretations of his thought, and is also

19. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

20. Detlev Claussen, Editor, *Spuren der Befreiung: Herbert Marcuse*, Edited by Detlev Claussen (Darmstadt: Luchterhand Verlag, 1981).

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the only document up to now which gives direct information about his research on Germany.[21] The topic was anti-democratic movements; the audience, a group of high-level experts, including many naturalized refugees. His thesis was as simple as it was ambiguous, for which reason his brief remarks were followed by a very long and lively discussion. There were, he said, no anti-democratic movements in Germany, and not only because everyone was parading their anti-Nazism. The German postwar order as a whole was a highly artificial structure in which the political forces would not evince a genuine connection with the social power structure. This social power structure was nothing new, and it was still clearly apparent. Marcuse's diagnosis, which again ended with an appeal not to end the Allied occupation, indicated that West Germany was Marcuse's first paradigm for the "one-dimensional society." Just as distinctly, it showed that his analytic premises were those of Western democratic theory: "By democratic institutions I mean democratic institutions in our Western sense, chiefly parliamentarism, representative government, civil rights and free trade-union organizations."[22]

H. Stuart Hughes' recollections of Marcuse seem to point in a different direction. Marcuse's superior from 1946 to 1948, Hughes became his subordinate's admirer and political sympathizer during that time: "He had always been to the left of Neumann. If then I had known more about German history, I should have noticed that he sought a link with Rosa Luxemburg. Later he had a good laugh about American politics; he was simply a hearty cynic. He was what one might call a buoyant pessimist. I can recall a later election, when he said it was immaterial for whom one voted; they were all the same. However, what fascinated me was that in 1942 Marcuse had gone to Washington and not to California with Adorno and Horkheimer. Herbert was older than Franz, yet he always appeared to be the younger of the two. Franz was such a strong and extraordinary character that Herbert kept in his shadow, and in fact he really only came into his own after Franz' death."[23]

The most important facet of Hughes' comments is his sharp observation of the friendship that first arose between Marcuse and Neumann during their years together in Washington. Aside from their psychological interest, they suggest that Neumann embodied a kind of

21. Morgenthau, *Germany and the Future of Europe*, *op.cit.*, pp. 108ff.
22. *Ibid*, pp. 108-113.
23. *Zur Archäologie der Demokratie in Deutschland*, *op.cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 56-57.

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political reality principle without which Marcuse would never have been able to think concretely about his utopianism (the term is certainly applicable) in the way that became increasingly characteristic of him. Until Neumann's death in 1954 he displayed in his published works a theoretical evolution leading to a revaluation and appreciation of the liberal tradition.[24] After moving to New York in 1952, Marcuse had frequent discussions with Neumann, and at times even lived with him.

The very contradictory nature of the ten years Marcuse spent serving the US government shows the continuum his postwar thought sprang from. This presupposes, of course, a literal understanding of the concept of "determined negation." It is already telling that *Eros and Civilization* (1955) was conceived immediately after the experience of the 1940s, in the context of lectures held during 1950-51 at the Washington School of Psychiatry.[25] Similarly, *Soviet Marxism* (1957) returned to ideas Marcuse had begun work on in 1952-53, i.e., just after his time at the State Department and probably even with direct personal assistance, at the Russian Research Center at Columbia University. The director of this institution, William L. Langer, had been in charge of building up the scholarly section of the OSS since 1942.[26] The continuity of Marcuse's thought can be grasped in, among other things, the catchwords which gave his 1950 lecture characteristic shape — positively in a Western style theory of democracy, negatively in the thesis of the rise of the manipulated society.

The postscript to the otherwise unchanged 1954 edition of *Reason and Revolution* is particularly significant. Marcuse points out that the defeat of fascism did not bring the end of totalitarian tendencies. In various forms they persisted in the capitalist West as well as the state-socialist East. He would have seen the opposition to these strains in the "force of negativity," as the language of the Hegelian-Marxist tradition puts it. But this force had been weakened through the integration of the empirical warranty of negation in the socialization process, so that every kind of opposition with potential to transcend the system, not just the

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24. On Neumann's concept of political freedom, see Neumann, *The Democratic and the Authoritarian State: Essays in Political and Legal Theory*, Edited with a Preface by Herbert Marcuse (New York: The Free Press, 1956), pp. Cf. also *Reform und Resignation: Gespräche über Franz L. Neumann*, Edited by Reiner Erd (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1985), pp. 183 ff.

25. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), p. xxviii

26. Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism: A Critical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958).

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working class, had been silenced. This, Marcuse concluded, rebounded on critical thought itself. The philosophy that had obeyed the call to practice "appears again as utopia."[27] Set in the context of the institutional experience of the 1940s, this analysis hinged on regret that democratic institutions no longer made the thing they were supposedly created for possible — the open resolution of social conflicts.

This train of thought takes on more weight in connection with the basic concern of *Soviet Marxism*, which is the only solid exposition of "real socialism" produced by the Frankfurt School. Nothing could be more false than to say that Marcuse was criticizing statist, bureaucratic socialism against the normative foil of a Western democratic theory. In the end, the book's entire thrust lies in its immanent critique of Soviet Marxism. He relies on the concept of technical rationality which, he argued, operated both pervasively and irrationally as ideology become practice in real socialism; for example, in state economic planning.[28] Technical rationality can only be defined as the perversion of the promise of reason and humanitarianism.

Marcuse knew that the procedure of immanent and historical critique would hit a raw nerve in the East. He knew as well that it would break an equally sensitive taboo in the Western world, which had meanwhile embarked on the hot phase of the Cold War, because the book drew attention to the decisive role of the American anti-communist hysteria of the 1950s in ending the New Deal era and setting the course toward one-dimensional society. Historically speaking, what was a clear reminder of an important motif of the 1940s rested logically on the maintenance of postulates of rationality. Even if these no longer existed in political institutions, they still seemed present in Western institutions of higher education. In any case, the satisfaction Marcuse expressed in the 1961 foreword to the book's second edition can be chalked up to this: "I had some success in the attempt to be free from Cold War propaganda and to offer an altogether objective analysis based on a solid interpretation of historical development."[29]

The lines of continuity between the 1940s and Marcuse's most speculative and realistic work are harder to trace. Here the paradox can only be elucidated. *Eros and Civilization* is marked by its high theoretical ambitions. It is an attempt to demonstrate the potential of Freudian psychoanalysis for political explanation and action by taking up and

27. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, *op.cit.*
28. Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*, *op.cit.*
29. *Ibid.*

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developing its most troublesome premises: adoption of the death instinct as a complement of the libido theory, and historical speculation about the primal horde and patricide. This theoretical enterprise seemed possible to Marcuse because the psychical conflict between the pleasure and reality principles is, so to speak, inscribed in a historical dimension — the unfolding of meritocracy. This society releases an increased expectation of pleasure in the masses, which then rebounds in conformity with the system through individual consumption. The process of "repressive desublimation" is at the same time living proof of a latent potential to break the system.[30] Whether or not the theoretical deduction is valid, it is clear that Marcuse was on the track of an objective tendency in Western industrial society, only he was a good decade ahead of time in using 1950s America to establish it. In 1955, it would have been hard to think of a more exact description of the specific etiological conditions or of a more exact prognosis of the political dynamic which appeared as the anti-authoritarian, promiscuous center of the student revolts in Berkeley, Paris or Berlin.

The concept of the "Great Refusal," first formulated in *Eros and Civilization*,[31] can be tied back into the philosophical category of negation. This brings to mind the concrete institutional meaning ascribed to it in *Reason and Revolution*. Viewed specifically in terms of a social strata, the protagonists of the Student Movement were recruited from the educated middle class (ignoring momentarily the ethnic components which the American movement also took on). But even more important, the temporary conditions of the success of the Student Movement were not only economic but decidedly political. The Student Movement could only unfold in those Western societies where liberal and constitutional structures were given sufficiently wide play, and it became a cultural and political beacon to the exact extent and precise point that traditional ideas of liberal freedoms were reinterpreted as new libertarian practice. In this sense, it is obvious that as much as the program of the "Great Refusal" was unprecedented in the history of Western democracy, it also presupposed that history.

Marcuse began his postwar writings with a program that bore all the signs of resignation — the return of social theory to philosophy. But it soon turned out that this was the prelude to a new historical phase in that the retreat to utopia changed into a new political optimism. The continuity of Marcuse's philosophical development since the 1950s lay

30. Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, *op.cit.*
31. *Ibid.*

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in his particular oscillation between an extreme historical pessimism and an equally extreme optimism — a kind of basic trust in the utopian possibilities for change. There is less a mystery than the persistence of a tension which originated in the 1940s. It is not that the tension can be explained by studying those years but, rather, that in them an element of mediation (in the Hegelian sense) becomes tangible — a mediation with practical dimensions. One can recognize this continuity in a later (again concealed) positive attitude toward bourgeois individualism, whose ideals of freedom and order (as expounded in *Reason and Revolution*) tend toward their own negation in the authoritarian state if they are not guaranteed by constitutional and democratic institutions. Even in Marcuse's sharpest criticisms of the present (*One-Dimensional Man*) there is neither indifference toward, nor contempt for the achievements of bourgeois democracy. Even in his last book, on the development of artistic modernism, Marcuse took a turn which, if the phrase were not so easily misunderstood in these neo-conservative times, might be described as a return to bourgeois conservatism.[32]

32. Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978).

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Notes and Commentary:

Goethe in Chains. West Berlin "at 750": The Politics of Commemoration

Katie Trumpener

Several years ago, a West Berlin city official made a rather surprising discovery. Although Shakespeare's plays have occupied a prominent place in German culture since the 18th century[1] and are still the most frequently performed in West German theater there was no street in the whole city bearing his name. Here was a state of affairs clearly in need of remedy: a city with dozens of streets named after generals and military victories might well wish, in the interest of balance, to commemorate an international cultural hero. In this spirit, on September 25, 1987, the Lord Mayor of London, the British Commander of Berlin, and the Mayor of West Berlin gathered to consecrate a newly created Shakespeare Square next to the Berlin Opera and to unveil a monumental bust of the timeless bard, a gift from the City of London on the occasion of Berlin's 750th anniversary.

Only a single, untimely incident marred the public ceremony: a group of ten sign-bearing protestors had to be removed by police. The protestors' sign, until it was torn away, had proclaimed this as Benno Ohnesorg Square. For the summer of 1987 marked the 20th anniversary of the untimely death of a Berlin student participating in a demonstration protesting the official visit of the Shah of Iran in a nearby street. Benno Ohnesorg was cornered by police and fatally shot from behind. In 1967, this marked a decisive turning point in the radicalization of the German student movement; in 1987, the demonstrators

1. Rediscovered by the German Enlightenment, celebrated by Herder for their mixture of popular material and literary refinement, translated into German by Wieland and the Schlegels, the plays of Shakespeare helped to catalyze the development in Germany of a new, self-consciously national literature.

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demanding a "Benno Ohnesorg Square," were outnumbered by gathered city officials. The official commemorative gesture (intended vaguely to invoke a "progressive" cultural legacy crossing national boundaries) worked mainly to block the attempt to create a genuinely progressive political memory.

The politics of commemoration in West Berlin, 1987 meant that: it had been 26 years since the building of the Wall, some 20 years since the student movement,[2] and precisely 10 years since the "German autumn" in which the mysterious deaths of incarcerated Red Army Faction leaders in their Stammheim prison cells marked the triumph of the state over the terrorist movement and consolidated the state's position as the self-proclaimed holder of the "monopoly on violence." But such "political" anniversaries were overshadowed by more prominent celebrations: on October 28 it was exactly 750 years since "Cölln" (first a twin city and then a district of Berlin) was mentioned in a document — the earliest written record of a settlement on the site of present-day Berlin. This "birthday" had only been celebrated once before, at 700, by the Nazis, a year after the Berlin Olympics (1937), as a further occasion to display the pomp and the power of their regime in the capital city of the Reich. Fifty years later, with a conservative government in power both in West Berlin and West Germany, it was time to celebrate Berlin's birthday again.

The choice of which histories deserved to be celebrated and canonized, which to be passed over in silence as unworthy of remembrance, inherent in the process of commemoration, the engagement and reaffirmation of legitimating historiographies of state, party or class ideologies. Cultural production, transmission and reception are of course always ideological; indeed, every institution and institutionalization of culture, every narrative, every university syllabus, every museum is covertly political, often not least in its very claim to be non-partisan, autonomous, concerned only with aesthetic issues. What is interesting is the complicated specificity of cultural and counter-cultural formations in a particular time and place. West Berlin, the object and ostensibly the subject of intense official celebration, presents a particularly complicated case, because

2. The student movement is effectively neutralized in an equivocating passage in an "official guide" to Berlin history. "On the whole, many students felt that their society was, at best, only superficially democratic. So the 'extra-parliamentary opposition' (APO) thought it was high time to start taking seriously the democratic renewal which, in their view, had been so gravely neglected after 1945. Another catalyst was the involvement of the USA in the Vietnam War. The APO also vehemently condemned the strong anti-communist sentiments that had helped uphold the political morale of the city for so many years . . . . Ultimately the freedom of Berlin was being defended in Vietnam, too, as many Berliners saw it. For quite some time no real dialogue was possible. The confrontation came to such a deadlock that both sides reacted with emotions instead of arguments. But after a few years the 'front' began to crumble. The student revolt had passed its zenith . . . Despite all its excesses and unrealistic expectations, the student revolt did put the finger on many of society's sore spots and stimulated changes in the Federal Republic." *Outlook Berlin* (Berlin: Berlin Information Center, 1987), p. 43.

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the tangled politics of the celebration only made explicit the tensions that have been there from the start. From the ostensible new beginning, the "Zero Hour" of 1945, Berlin has been an ideological locus *par excellence,* the site of overlapping military occupations and binary philosophies of state. Today, West Berlin — a necessary fiction imposed on an impossible geography — is an archeological site, an island museum of the ruined monuments of its past glory or vainglory as capital city of the Second and the Third Reich. It is also a much-vaunted "bulwark of democracy" and the third-largest Turkish city in the world by virtue of its 114,000 resident guest-workers, who after 20 years of residence have little prospect of citizenship or even a vote in civic elections. The city is also a counter-cultural oasis, its geographical remoteness from the mainstream of West German life both facilitating the growth of Leftist social movements — from the student movement to the anarchist-influenced squatters and "autonomous" movements — and inhibiting their spread.[3]

Originally, the festivities around Berlin's anniversary were to have been a collaborative effort between two governments and two cities, between West Berlin and "Berlin — Capital City of the German Democratic Republic," reuniting in celebration a city divided for 40 years. They were thus to serve as concrete evidence of the success of the West German Christian Democratic government in achieving stable and improved relations with East Germany: their "tough" conservative position, despite (or indeed precisely because of) its controversial insistence on the reunification of Germany, would be shown successful, where the compromises of their Social-Democratic predecessors had failed.[4] In the end,

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3. A number of recent films explore Berlin's paradoxical status in particularly striking ways. See Helke Sander's *The All-Around Reduced Personality* (1977), Helga Reidemeister's *Drehort Berlin* (1987), Helma Sanders-Brahms' *Laputa: Berlin, Floating Island* (1987), Ulrike Ottinger's *Portrait of a Drinker* (1979). In comparison to these vivid portraits, Wim Wender's *The Sky Above Berlin* (1987) is disappointingly sentimental and clichéd. Uwe Schrader's *Kanakerbraut* (1983) and Rafael Fuster-Pardo's *In der Wüste* (1986) are unsentimental depictions of life in Kreuzberg. *Shade, dass Beton nicht brennt* (1981), made by Gruppe November (Gabrielle Bartels, Niels Chr. Bolbrinker, Barbara Etz, et. al.), is a participant-documentary about the Berlin squatters' movement. *Journeys to Berlin/71* (1974), an all-too-seldom discussed film by American independent Yvonne Rainer, is an important meditation on West German terrorism.

4. "*The German Question*. Berlin may be divided, but in status terms it continues to be one city. Although — or arguably because — it is particularly affected by division, Berlin more clearly than any other area testifies to the artificial character and historically unresolved nature of the situation. If Germans and Europeans in general feel division is artificial, how much more so must the people of Berlin! Berliners in East and West can look back on an unseparable civic heritage dating back 750 years . . . . The further back one looks, the more one comes to realize that change has always been Germany's keynote. There are many indications that the division of the continent, the country and the city will not be history's last word on the subject. Berliners have an opportunity of influencing history's answer. The social, economic and intellectual condition of the city will weigh heavily in the process." *Outlook Berlin, op.cit.*, p. 55. Or see Eberhard Diepgen (Christian Democratic Party), Acting Mayor of Berlin, on the historical importance of the

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and perhaps inevitably, the Christian Democrats' tough line and their characteristic polemicizing against East Germany as "prison-like" and "totalitarian," led East Germany to cancel their participation in the joint celebrations long before they begun.

Forced, in the plans for its separate festivities as in its everyday economic life, into its usual unequal competition with the West, the East German government struggled to match the scale of the Western celebrations (exhibits; parades; the rennovation and decoration of the city; on at least one evening concurret and competing fireworks in a divided night sky) at a fraction of the Western budget. But it succeeded mainly in unleashing the long-standing resentment of the provinces towards what was seen as a typical economic favoring of the capital city. East Berlin car-owners visiting outlying areas during the months of celebration found their car tires slashed; bumper-stickers throughout the country ("Dresden — 781 Years"; "Leipzig — 821 Years"; "Berlin: 750 Years and not a Day Longer") condemned the commemoration as arbitrary and pointless; in Dresden, 70 truck drivers refused to transport extra loads of vegetables to the capital. The result of such protests, backed by official complaints from regional governments, was that the anniversary celebrations ended somewhat abruptly, and much of the planned building and renovation was cancelled completely.

The collapse of joint plans left West Berlin to celebrate itself as it usually has, as a stronghold against communist imperialism. Surrounded by and yet saved from the economic and political "horrors" of the East, the city has remained an important rationale for the continued presence of Allied troops on West German soil. The celebration of "Berlin's long history" and tradition of "freedom," crowned by official visits by Reagan, Thatcher and Mitterand, could be seen as an attempt to reinsert Christian Democratic frontier rhetoric into a political climate marked increasingly by anti-Americanism, the call for nuclear disarmament, and a popular disillusionment with NATO. It also served as the occasion for self-congratulatory rhetoric about Berlin's status as a world city. For West Berlin has come to see itself as a world-class purveyor of culture, artistic as well as political "show-case of the West"; this year, indeed, West Berlin is not only 751 years old, but also "European City of Culture 1988" as designated by the

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anniversary celebrations: "I invite you to celebrate the 750th birthday of Berlin. Participate in our joyous celebrations and allow yourself to be fascinated by the history and the present of a world city . . . My native city is younger than many other German cities. Yet the 750th anniversary of the capital city of the Germans is something special. The changing history of our fatherland has led to the division of the city. Today two different systems stand in competition to one another. But in the consciousness of the citizen there is one city, one birthday, one shared history and one shared hope for the future. The 750th anniversary celebration in the western part of Berlin means to represent the liveliness of this city, which finds its vital energy in freedom and democracy and in the nature of our form of society, and which wants to shape its present and future with courage, with imagination, but also with a certain pride at what it has already accomplished." *750 Jahre Berlin 1987* (Berlin: Berliner Festspiele, 1987), 3, p.3.

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EEC. But it sees itself as cosmopolitan in another sense as well; despite the persistance of xenophobia and racism, as the West German city with the most foreign inhabitants, it takes pride in its success as a "melting-pot." In subway cars — beneath official signs recommending a spirit of friendly cooperation among passengers, and urging youthful passengers to refrain from opening the doors or pushing each other out of the cars while they are in motion — a new series of posters has for the last few months presented the pictures of a woman acccountant from Greece, a dental assistant from Turkey, a woman engineer from Poland, a grocery store owner from Vietnam. All these foreigners are presented as accomplished, productive, well-integrated into the German community; all of them live *unter uns*. (As a graffitied addendum to one poster pointed out, the phrase, while its ostensible meaning is conciliatory, unconsciously gives away the truth of the position of guest workers in Germany — they live "among us" without belonging to us — indeed in many ways, even in our midst, they still live "beneath us.") At the bottom of each poster, a little imprimatur explains the origin and occasion for this public service campaign: beside a little Berlin bear, the official symbol of the city, the motto "Tolerance has a Tradition: 750 Years Berlin."

But while the season of celebration saw a further influx of foreign faces and currencies, West Berliners seemed almost as unhappy with the expense and the self-congratulatory tone of the celebrations as their East German counterparts. Thousands expressed their displeasure by marching in a satiric anti-celebration parade which parodied the personalities and the intentions behind official festivities. Other protesting took a more violent form: the mysterious firebombing, for example, of a station which formed part of a controversial monorail system erected, at huge expense, as a technological show-piece for the anniversary celebrations. And on the evening of May 1, the day after the official anniversary festivities had been opened by a series of lavish banquets and exclusive receptions, riots began in Kreuzberg and lasted almost two days: a large supermarket was burned to the ground, dozens of smaller stores broken into and looted, parked cars set on fire, another subway station partially destroyed.

One of the poorest districts in Berlin, Kreuzberg has long been the main center of various ethnic communities. Full of dilapidated 19th century houses with sub-standard heating and plumbing (and thus an enclave of low rents in a city plagued by real estate speculation), it absorbed successive waves of guest workers, immigrants and refugees until a city ordinance prohibited any more foreigners from moving into the district. (Rationalized initially as an attempt to prevent the formation of American-style ghettos, the ordinance was recently revised: it now applies, its racism more pointed than ever, to Turkish nationals alone.)[5] Kreuzberg, however, attracted not only dispossessed foreigners but

5. "Integration of foreign residents is promoted in many ways. Berlin is anxious to prove itself a city of opportunity for them too. But in Berlin's out-of-the-ordinary position, these efforts can only succeed if their numbers are not too large. Otherwise, the

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politically marginal young Germans as well, becoming the center of the West Berlin, and indeed the West German "alternative" scene. During the last 10 years, in an attempt to develop alternate forms of communal living, and in protest against an American-style housing politics of slum clearance, high-rise building and zoning, hundreds of "spontanist" squatters moved into dying neighborhoods around Kreuzberg, occupied abandoned or condemned buildings and began to rennovate them. Government and police attempts to "clean up" these districts — by emptying and often bulldozing the buildings, and by trying and sentencing house members under anti-terrorist laws forbidding "the formation of criminal organizations" — led repeatedly to bloody street battles, culminating in 1981 in a wave of massive clearances, demonstrations and arrests.

Five years later, after a series of negotiations and amnesties, many of the "occupied houses" transformed into "self-help projects," the former occupiers transformed into legal tenants who not only pay monthly rent but are under contractual obligation to complete extensive rennovations to their houses. The state has, as usual, managed with some success to recuperate and regulate the forces of protest, turning anarchists into home-owners who work overtime to meet their mortgage obligations. Thanks to a shifting housing policy, which now favors the reconstruction of neighborhood communities, sections of Kreuzberg itself have undergone massive government-subsidized renovations and have begun a slow, steady process of gentrification.[6]

In the last 5 years Kreuzberg can be seen as a government attempt to sanitize political and ethnic sub-cultures, in order finally to market them as cultural commodities. The community's lapse into burning and looting was, of course, not part of the original improvement plan (although, in fact, the May Day troubles quickly gained legendary status throughout West Germany, and for the rest

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city's open climate could suffer." *Outlook Berlin*, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

6. "*Alternative Life Styles* . . . In this respect, too, Berlin again has turned out to be the city in Germany that initiates and disseminates new trends. But who or what is really 'alternative'? We are faced with extraordinary variety and diversity . . . . On the other hand, many alternatives are impatient and intolerant. Some see themselves as a sort of elite and are so presumptuous as to think they can pave the way for society as a whole. They hail from the Marxist and Maoist circles of the 1960s. But, in the final analysis, only modern industrial society based on the division of labor can create enough affluence to keep such a complicated economic, social and political mechanism as the city of Berlin running smoothly — especially in view of its proximity to the GDR . . . Many a shop that began flying an 'alternative' banner meanwhile can hardly be distinguished from its 'bourgeois' counterpart. And many conventional enterprises are not blind to the signs of the times either and often adopt a little 'counterbalance' too." *Outlook Berlin*, *op. cit.*, p. 87. See the many publications of the *Internationale Bauausstellung 1987* (IBA), a semi-autonomous architectural organisation created with public money, and commissioned to carry out inner-city renovation and build model housing. But see also Karl Homuth Statik, *Potemkinscher Dörfer: Behutsame Stadterneuerung und gesellschaftliche Macht in Berlin-Kreuzberg* (Berlin: Ökotopia, 1984).

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of the summer added substantially to the district's popularity among younger tourists). But where it found itself unable to buy out trouble and resistance, the government was, in the final resort, still able to block it out. If the riot police had difficulty quelling the spontaneous combustion in Kreuzberg on the first of May, in early June they were on hand in large numbers to "contain" and disperse the huge demonstration downtown on the eve of Reagan's official visit. The next day, during the hours the American president spent in the city, speaking at the Wall about freedom and democracy, the police simply cordoned off all the roads and shut down the subway lines leading in and out of Kreuzberg, a temporary Berlin Wall, to keep people in their place. Members of the riot police have since had a controversial sweatshirt printed up. Its legend: *veni, vidi, vici*. Above it, a coat of arms bears two pairs of hand-cuffs, two sets of prison bars, a Berlin bear armed with a shield and a riot stick. Happy birthday.

The Official Story

A tradition of tolerance, the preservation and commemoration of the past: for several months last year, the newspaper columns and the intellectual life of West Germany were dominated by a controversial "historians' debate" over the meaning and legacy of the Holocaust. Drawing in increasing numbers of historians, social theorists and journalists from Left and Right, the debate became the occasion for a long-overdue discussion of neo-nationalism, historiographical bias, the uneasy if official legacy of a "collective guilt," and the recent tendency toward a conservative revisionism. Catalyzing the debate was the suggestion of a conservative Berlin historian that the Holocaust be considered not a "singular" or "original" event, but rather comparable to, indeed probably even a reaction to and copy of the Stalinist Gulag and the Bolshevik extermination of the Kulaks. (The Jews rounded up, interned and murdered in the course of the Holocaust might even, he suggested, have been understood by Hitler as "prisoners of war," since in September 1939 Chaim Weizmann had declared that the Jews of the world would fight the war with England!)[7]

Recently, the last remains of the Jewish Ghetto in Frankfurt were dismantled despite public protest, and one of the most telling publishing scandals concerned a guide to Jewish Berlin, commissioned by its publisher to coincide with the 750th anniversary celebration. The city government bought the book in huge numbers, sending copies abroad as presents to hundreds of Jewish emigrés, former citizens of Berlin who were invited back to re-visit the city during its anniversary year. In September, however, the press reported that publisher and author were suing one another — the publisher had apparently

7. *"Historiker-Streit": Die Dokumentation der Kontroverse um die Einzigartigkeit der nationalsozialistischen Judenvernichtung* (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1987), a collection of the key articles and exchanges in the debate. See especially the pieces by Ernst Nolte, pp. 24ff. See also Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Entsorgung der deutschen Vergangenheit? Ein polemischer Essay zum "Historikerstreit"* (München: C.H. Beck Verlag, 1988).

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found the original manuscript too radical in its treatment of the Nazi era and commissioned a different author to rewrite it. The book finally published was a nostalgic treatment of a lost aspect of Berlin life, most references to anti-semitism, the *Reichskristallnacht* and the Holocaust simply edited out. The erasure of history so as to form a smoother, less disturbing narrative, an "official story": this specter haunts the recent renaissance of West German interest in history as a national legacy. How can a national history, a national pride be reconstructed without resurrecting the family ghosts?[8]

These difficulties are on several levels historical, the legacy of the post-war treatment of pre-war history, for the period of post-war occupation saw a paradoxical division in the way the Soviet and Western zones dealt with the legacy of fascism.[9] From 1945 to 1948 the Americans undertook official "denazification" (the removal of former party members from public office and the civil services, the questioning of virtually every German as to party sympathies and activities from 1932 on) which finally, for lack of funding and manpower, had to be shut down with a series of general amnesties for all but major figures. The Soviets' denazification procedures were more straight-forward: an exemplary or symbolic denazification of the whole country through the execution or imprisonment of key figures was deemed a sufficient basis for re-education and conversion. The Nazi buildings left standing in the Soviet zone were simply redecorated and reused, their original purpose changed utterly, their original meaning rendered harmless by the change in context. East Germany undertook no form of compensation.

The Western zones followed a different course, emphasizing the need to create a *tabula rasa* by digging up every last trace of the Nazi past by the roots. The denazification policies had woefully limited success where individual party members were concerned: to give only one example, a number of doctors and geniticists who played crucial roles in the establishment and the practice of Nazi eugenics, continued their academic careers after the war in West German universities and research institutes. But buildings could not camoflage themselves so easily, and many of the key Nazi ministries in Berlin were in fact quite literally de-constructed, undergoing a process of architectural liquidation known as *Tiefentrümmerung*. Not only were the walls razed, their very foundations were dug up and destroyed, so that no trace remained: many of these sites are now completely covered by parkland. When Rudolph Hess died, Spandau Prison was dismantled, stone by stone, just as the Allies had agreed several decades ago.

8. *Wegweiser durch die jüdische Berlin* (Berlin: Nicholai Verlag, 1987). See also Ulrich Eckhardt, *Der Moses Mendelssohn Pfad — Eine Berliner Zeitreise oder Wanderwege in eine versunkene Stadt* (Berlin: Berliner Festspiele, 1987).

9. For the complicated history of post-war denazification of Germany see, e.g., Justus Fürstenau, *Entnazifizierung: Ein Kapitel deutscher Nachkriegspolitik* (Neuwied: Luchterhand Verlag, 1969) and Lutz Niethammer, *Die Mitläuferfabrik: Die Entnazifizierung am Beispiel Bayerns* (Berlin: J.H. W. Dietz Verlag, 1982); issued originally as *Entnazifizierung in Bayern: Säuberung und Rehabilitierung unter amerikanischer Besatzung* (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1972).

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The Soviet Command, West Berlin intellectuals and architectural preservation groups argued in vain that the building should remain standing and be re-used; it could, for example, house a long-needed anti-Nazi museum. Instead, the site will probably be used to build a new shopping center for members of the British Army.

Kaput und neu: on October 28, less that two months after the prison was dismantled, the Berlin celebrations reached their ceremonial high-point with the laying of a plaque to mark the spot where the new, federally-funded Museum of German History will be built both at huge expense and expanse (located near the Reichstag on parkland covering the traces of Nazi administrative buildings, the finished museum complex will be eight times the size of the old parliament building). Everything about the future museum had been surrounded with intense controversy.[10] Its size and its post-modern building style, Leftist critics charged, will give the museum a self-aggrandizing monumentality associated with the imperial and Nazi architecture whose ruins it will stand on. Its location is problematic in other respects as well: after the division of Berlin and of Germany, it was decided that this vast expanse of land, in close proximity both to the old Reichstag and the Brandenburger Gate, would be kept free to be used for joint administrative buildings in the event that Germany is ever re-united. Thus, some liberals argued, the very museum which the Christian Democrats insist will give back to all of Germany a sense of its national history and thus help re-build a unifying sense of national pride will in a very concrete sense stand in the path of any real unification. Furthermore, there was wide-spread anxiety that the future museum (which so far possesses neither a building nor a collection to display) is intended to become a monument to the conservative government, presenting a partisan and dangerously nationalistic view of German history. Indeed, during the founding ceremonies broadcast throughout West Germany, Chancellor Kohl, accompanied by the music of Mendelssohn and Beethoven, presented the director of the museum with the cornerstone piece of the new collection — a first edition of *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*, Hoffmann von Fallerslebens's nationalist anthem of 1850, destined to become the national anthem of a united and then a divided land.

The new West Berlin museum is explicitly meant to serve as a long overdue, conservative counter-weight to the Marxist interpretation of German history presented for the last 25 years in the Museum of German History in East Berlin. In a radio discussion on the eve of the cornerstone festivities, one of the historians on the steering committee defended the necessarily-partisan historiography of a historical museum by arguing that no one's political opinions were ever influenced by anything they saw in a museum anyway. As he presented it, the role of the museum is simply to provide a chance for reflection and discussion, and its presentation of history will be correspondingly open-ended. Understood even

10. See, e.g., Hartmut Boochmann, *Geschichte im Museum: Zu den Problemen und Aufgaben eines Deutschen Historischen Museums* (Munich: Deutsche Kunstverlag, 1987).

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by its planners as useless but necessary, the future museum may consist of a blandly "pluralist" presentation of some controversial political events or movements, omitting others altogether. (The result may well be a history able to get away with the presupposition of an essential Germanness, a progressive direction to recent German economic history, and the geographic determination of a German-dominated Central Europe.) Or — and this alternative seems the more likely, given both the architectural plans and the prevailing mood among the European intelligensia — its conservatism might manifest itself as a chic post-modernism, aesthetically stimulating but politically reactionary, characterized simultaneously by extravagant historicism and a successful attempt to de-historicize and thus diffuse the embarassing issues of the German past.

Style used to sanitize history, to shift public controversy from the political to the aesthetic domain — such conservative post-modernism was popular in Berlin in several of the "historical exhibits" meant to honor the city's anniversary. The tactic was announced already by the covers of the official program guide,[11] which for all three issues took the form of collages, juxtaposing (onto a background the colors of sky and earth) images from different historical periods in Berlin's history. The first collage presented overlapping pictures of different train-stations, travellers and means of transport from the late 19th century to the 1920s. Used for the spring program, it was meant to initiate the rush of visitors to Berlin and had as its center-piece *Die Reise Nach Berlin* (*The Journey to Berlin*), a transportation and travel exhibit in the former Hamburger Bahnhof. The second cover featured a Berlin landscape, a Prussian ship, 19th century monuments, a cut-out figure of Mozart (a reminder of Berlin's past as opera metropolis) and a series of dancing couples from the *fin de siècle* to the 1920s. This summer program emphasized outdoor festivities from open air history pageants and concerts to fireworks, a parade of historical boats and *Mythos Berlin*, an "experiential" anti-exhibit on the grounds around the ruins of the former Anhalter Bahnhof. The third cover juxtaposed Berlin personalities, from a suit of medieval armor and a Renaissance cardinal to the Enlightenment-era chief rabbi of Berlin and the salon hostess Henrietta Sontag, and a number of figures from the 1920s: café celebrities, a boxer, women with bobbed hair. This autumn program was centered around *Berlin, Berlin*, the main "official exhibit of the history of Berlin" in the recently rennovated Martin-Gropius-Bau.

The festival program not only separated spheres — the aesthetic and the recreational from the historical — and emphasized the Weimar period as the golden age of Berlin culture and life, an era of artistic and political freedom separated from the imperial era that came before and the Nazi era that came after it. The very form of program-covers themselves was presumably meant as a kind of homage to the 1920s, the era in which the collage, as a modernist art-form, was of particular significance to Berlin artists from Heartfield to Höch. A

11. *750 Jahre Berlin 1987*, *op. cit.*, Journals 1-3.

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quintessential form of the modernism which took shape in Germany under the sign of the 1918 revolution, the collage represented the fusion of an aesthetic and a political avant-garde: banalities banding together, in a sort of ultra-leftist spontanism, to puncture the mystical power of "high art," to over-turn canons and institutions. In marked contrast, the "collages" which in the 1980s adorned the Berlin programs are acts of official reverence, a historical homage which misses, distorts, simplifies, commercializes the city's modernist past: their juxtapositions completely lacking in formal or political tensions, they gathered canonized and forgotten images with apparent indiscriminateness, different historical moments co-existing in them without friction.

Notwithstanding their divergent tendencies in subject and in politics, the three major exhibits had in common a similar "pluralism." Post-modern, post-historical, post-Marxist: the three occupied haunted spaces. Once, long ago, in 1931, the train journey from Hamburg to Berlin, from Berlin to Hamburg took less than half as long as it does now, across borders and check-points: with nostalgia and the vestiges of a Cold War anger, *The Journey to Berlin* displayed the requisites and souvenirs of journeys to Berlin in the deserted train-station, where thousands of trains once set off into what is now another country. *Mythos Berlin* composed its experiential landscape on the ruins of a mid-19th century train-station in which the trains heading outward were once turned around. The exhibit at once exploited the elegiac pathos of the ruin, turning it into an angry symbol for a city whose history was never successfully turned around, only destroyed and repressed from without and within. Although the train station itself was damaged during war-time bombings, it was only systematically levelled in 1961 as part of the trend to raze-and-rebuild. The bunker next to the train-yard remains standing, too solid and massive to be destroyed.

Nearby, *Berlin, Berlin* filled the Martin-Gropius Bau, a relatively new exhibition space, built originally in the 19th century as a school, and then used as a museum of the applied arts. From the 1920s onward, it housed the city museum of paleontology and pre-history. In the 1930s the art school next door to it was transformed into the national headquarters of the Gestapo: the art books in its library were burned, thrown away or, according to the accounts of surviving prisoners, left in heaps in the corner of the Gestapo's torture cells. The Gestapo headquarters were torn down in 1956; and the Martin-Gropius-Bau left in ruins, reconstructed only in 1980 to serve as the site of a highly successful and controversial exhibit on the legacy of Prussia, and later of *Zeitgeist*, a huge contemporary art exhibit which decisively launched Berlin neo-expressionism on the international art market. Until recently, the building stood surrounded by a huge expanse of rubble and grass, while the city government argued with a variety of political and architectural groups about how to re-use a site which for 13 years had been "the most feared address in Germany." So far, only a temporary solution has been reached: the foundations of the Gestapo building were unearthed and for 5 months, the remains of basement walls formed the site for *The Topography of Terror*,

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a small historical exhibit about the Gestapo and SS organization, the Berlin resistance and the organization of the concentration camps. One of the few anniversary exhibits to deal directly with the Nazi era in the city's history, it was virtually the only one to document the inability of a succession of governments to find satisfactory means of dealing with its problematic legacy.[12]

A hundred yards away, the huge "official exhibit" of Berlin history was resolute and unrepentant in its refusal to concern itself with the out-dated problems of legacy, succession, continuity. It took for granted that the past is gone and lost, that any attempts at reconstruction say far more about the reconstructors than the "period" it depicts. "What is really historical about this exhibit," the catalogue announced proudly, "is its mode of exhibition." Unusually sparse in its use of written explanations and overviews, the exhibit made few concessions to traditional notions of museum pedagogy, and little attempt to interest some abstract general public in "its history" by rendering it somehow "accessible": its primary concern was apparently to avoid compromising the aesthetic integrity of the objects it exhibited. As the catalogue promises, "no lovingly recreated worker's kitchen (with imitation dry rot made of acryllic paint) will disturb the concentration on the individual exhibition pieces."[13] Instead, *Berlin, Berlin* consisted of over 3,000 individual artifacts, arranged in a series of 36 rooms. Filling the entire central courtyard was a huge white city skyline, the irregular and intersecting silhouettes of skyscrapers, signs in white neon announcing "RADIO" and "ASPHALT," subway signs, airplanes. Berlin as Metropolis, Berlin as embodiment of modernity, of urbanity, of the 1920s, Berlin as "the fastest city in the world": the central installation dominates the rest of the space in the building, visible in bits from every vantage-point, from the doorways of various historical rooms (Berlin as 18th century garrison, as grand hotel, as Luna Park, as imperial city, as site of total war). The whole exhibit was dominated by the —

12. See also Vittorio Magnago Lampugnanu, "Die Analogie der Widersprüche: Fragmentarische Anmerkungen zum Gebäude des ehemaligen Kunstgewerbemuseums in Berlin," in *Zeitgeist: Internationale Kunstausstellung Berlin* (Berlin: Fröhlich und Kaufmann Verlag, 1982), pp. 49-61; Reinhard Rürup, ed., *Topographie des Terrors: Gestapo, SS und Reichssicherheitshauptamt auf dem "Prinz-Albrecht-Gelände." Eine Dokumentation* edited by Gottfried Korff and Reinhard Rürup (Berlin: Verlag Willmuth Arenhövel, 1987); *Berlin, Berlin* (Berlin: Nicolai, 1987). Note Rürup's role both in the *Topographie* and the *Berlin, Berlin* exhibits; one of the most surprising aspects of the official Berlin exhibits is that the same people appear in the credits both of the most progressive and the most conservative, the most didactic and the most aesthetic exhibits. Is this phenomenon the result of the high unemployment rate among German academics (the anniversary celebrations, for all their political ambiguities, were greeted by many intellectuals as a well-funded make-work project), or is it the mark of an intellectual culture industry in which intellectuals — either under contract or scraping together a living from "free-lance" piece-work — find themselves, like the Hollywood auteur directors of the classic period, working in a variety of genres, with a script, a cast of characters and a budget pre-determined by the studio?

13. In the foreword to the exhibition catalogue, reprinted in *750 Jahre Berlin 1987*, *op. cit.* p. 9.

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specter of Alfred Döblin's Berlin[14] as Alexanderplatz — a modernist city at the intersection of various discourses.

Berlin as a production of discourses, an encyclopedic collection, a set of artifacts: so far, so good. The problem was that this conception of overlapping discourses remained in the courtyard, trapped in the neon, while in the building around it — divided into traditional taxonomies, in theatrically staged rooms, each representing a single period or institution, things and dates hung suspended and isolated. "Industrialization . . . Communal administration and police . . . The technological substructure of the modern city . . . Travel and tourism . . . Food supplies and consumerism . . . Parks and cemetaries . . . Health care and hygiene . . . Court life . . . Art and theatre . . . Institutions of learning . . . Slums, poverty, prostitution . . . Charities, Working life . . . The growth of Berlin . . . The freeing of the body . . . The rationalization of work . . . Popular entertainment . . . Literary cafés . . . The clash of political symbols . . . Dictatorship. Terror. Total war . . ." The artifacts were in one room or another, one staging, one discourse, one historical moment or the next — the exhibition reproduced the separation of spheres it describes. The household and the factory, the slum and the charity, the park and the cemetary, high and low culture, disparate historical moments simply lain side by side, lacking connectives, explanations, motivations, causal relations. Nor was there even a justification for emphasis and lack of it: after seven rooms devoted to the Weimar Republic, and four devoted to the Third Reich, the exhibit ended weakly and hastily after the building of the Wall, with only one room for the last 20 years of Berlin history, the student and squatter movements, the artistic avant-garde passed over lightly, and only the briefest mention of the huge Turkish population. It was almost impossible to make any connections or comparisons between different political movements and different forms of social progress, different revolutions, different modes of oppression. The exhibit did not allow any discussion of continuity, only a recognition of separateness and discreteness.

The alert, the indefatigable, perhaps the irreverent visitor began to free-associate during the passage from one room to the next, from boilers and sewer systems (industrialization) to ceremonial swords (the development of the civil service), from the tiled "hygiene" room (with its oversize wax models of diseased babies and hard-edged commercial art advertising communal baths) to the rooms on court life, art, academies — reading against the grain. But most visitors crushed by an obligation to consider 3,000 objects separately and equally, may well have resorted to a ninety-minute official tour of the exhibit — at 33 objects a minute, and a new room every two and a half minutes, the artifacts and installations must have been little more than a vague blur.[15]

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14. Alfred Döblin and his famous 1929 novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* were the subjects of an exhibition this fall at the Kunstamt Kreuzberg: *Alfred Döblin zum Beispiel: Stadt und Literatur*.

15. An alternative strategy of exhibition, more didactic but finally less elitist, is

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The exhibition poster for *Berlin, Berlin* featured a famous anonymous photograph from the 1920s: a man with a briefcase, his features completely obscured in shadow as he crosses under the subway bridge at the Zoo, behind him a view of a busy downtown, crowds crossing streets, a bus with a huge advertisement for toothpaste driving away. Reduced to his silhouette, the man reappeared throughout the building: in large format, pasted over a mirrored wall to indicate the way to the exhibit, and to keep people from walking into the wall of mirror; in small format on the chests of some visitors, to identify the members of the tour groups as they were swept from room to room. Anonymous, in shadow, overshadowed by the traffic and the conflicting advertisements of the city, it is not clear that this exhibit imagined or created any other kind of public. In some important way, it failed to live up to the promise of its name: one could imagine a different exhibit in which the "comma," and the repetition of the city's name would have highlighted the dubiousness of celebrating this city that is not one, in a "Germany" that is more than ever a fictional construct. To what extent has this always been a city not only of "colorful" contrast but of violent contradiction? (One of the peculiarities of Berlin city architecture since the 19th century is that, often people from different socio-economic groups share the same apartment building: the well-to-do facing the street, the poor looking onto a gloomy back courtyard. How did these people live side by side?) From Cölln and Berlin, to Berlins East and West: what would a historical exhibit look like if it began with the present partition of the city and moved backwards, examining the extent to which Berlin has always been multiple and divisive, if it contrasted artifacts past and present, and it gave a more thorough and nuanced account of the various Allied, Soviet, East and West German proposals for the city's present and future? *Berlin/Berlin*: where was the account of the effects of ethnic and religious diversity, of the intertwined traditions of tolerance and repression, of the struggles between the individual districts of Berlin and the central government, between factions during the 1918 revolution and the 1932 election, the socialist and communist parties, between city government, city police, students and radicals? So many questions, of the kind Brecht's inquisitive worker demanded of history, and here, in the neon light, so few answers.

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by the displays of the controversial, Marxist-influenced Historisches Museum in Frankfurt. The design of the museum strives for an integration of spheres, presenting historical events as intersection of various social and economic forces. And while the museum displays include a number of valuable original paintings (including works by Dürer and Grünewald), these works of art are not exhibited in the usual art gallery fashion, on blank walls, with as little as possible to distract the viewer's attention from the aesthetic. Instead each work of art becomes the occasion for an exemplary interpretation, the walls around the picture used to set up a socio-historical apparatus. The foreground of a fourteenth century crucifixion scene, for example, is crowded with soldiers, mourners, gamblers, passersby; both the composition of the picture itself, and the dress and the attitude of the various figures within it, are analysed for the information they reveal about fourteenth century notions of social hierarchy.

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Suitcases and Ramps

Another major Berlin exhibit, *The Journey to Berlin*, attempted unsuccessfully to avoid historical subjects altogether; indeed, the hope of its organizers was clearly to steer clear of the political and the controversial, even if this meant a completely trivialized presentation of its ostensible subjects (transportation, tourism, the growth of Berlin through immigration). "Significance" ceased to be a criterion for selection: most of the exhibition space was correspondingly taken up with vast collections of just *things*: travel items (travel alarm clocks, goggles, portable toilets, gramophones and typewriters), stewardess uniforms, Autobahn maps and train time-tables from the Nazi era, photographs of colonized Africans on display in their native dress at the German Colonial Exhibit of 1896, and pages of hundreds of American signatures (from Helena, Butte, and Ketchum, Montana) gathered for the Berlin Freedom Shrine (part of a Cold War "Crusade for Freedom: Help Lift the Iron Curtain Everywhere"). Add to this kitschy presents given to the Berlin government by visiting dignitaries, pictures of visitors (including, in the early 1960s, a group of white schoolboys from Pretoria) staring appalled at the atrocity of the Berlin Wall, Berlin board games, guidebooks, souvenir postcards. Item 1923, entitled "The Journey to Berlin," like the exhibit itself, was typical of the exponents on display here: a collection of 86 sugar cubes collected during journeys to Berlin in the restaurants of train-stations, rest-stops, airports.

Though it side-stepped a direct presentation of the political factors and factionalism that led to the building of the Wall, the exhibit focused particular attention on the difficulties the partition of the city and the country have created for travellers. The first room of the exhibit was devoted to a polemical account of difficulties, past and present, encountered on the transit roads through East Germany to West Berlin: a simulated section of transit road was lined with newspaper headlines from the tabloid press of the 1950s detailing the martyrdom of transit travellers ("Russians throw cobble stones at travellers," "Long delays at border crossings" and so on), and a special guest book invited the exhibition visitor to recount stories, experiences, complaints about the transit crossings. The section of the exhibit devoted to "Berlin Art Treasures and their Travels" recounted at length the tragic story of Nofertiti and her daughter Ankheesenpaaton, divided during their lifetime by intrigue at the Egyptian court, discovered together as statues in archeological excavations by the German Oriental Society from 1907-1914 and exhibited in the same city, only to be separated again by the Wall and the division of the city. The mixture of frivolity and pathos was typical of the whole exhibit, as was the conservative political stance concealed behind a "politically neutral" presentation of "works of art" in their showcases. This account seems to suggest a post-modernist aesthetic behind the exhibit's kitsch sensibility, its heterogenity of materials — except for the exhibit's total refusal (or perhaps, more charitably, its naive failure) to problematize its own politics and its own exhibition strategies: it was not misguidedly post-

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modernist so much as misguidedly "populist."

But the people were everywhere absent from the exhibit, as was their history. Focussing on middle and upper-class tourism, *The Journey to Berlin* depicted travel as a matter of luxury hotels, evening clothes, sight-seeing; the uneven development of urban, inter-urban and rural transportation, or even of public transportation within different areas of the city was left as completely unexplored as the problems of the immigrant, there was no mention at all of the fact that, well into the 20th century the German trains mirrored the class stratification of German society, equipped not only with first and second class, but also third and fourth class cars.[16] Instead, the exhibit recorded with feeling the sad fact that 330,000 German "savers," paying for Volkswagen in installments, never in fact received them, the unfortunate result of the 1945 events!

This large-scale presentation of the history and development of transportation technology included no reflections on the interconnection between transportation and national centralization, nor on the possible connections between transportation and diplomatic imperialism, despite a few references to the abortive plans in the first years of the 20th century to build a "Berlin-Baghdad Railroad." Occluding the sinister role German train transport played in carrying out the Holocaust, the exhibit made no mention either of the role the train network had played 20 years before in ensuring the coming of WWI (once the German troop trains had been time-tabled in late August 1914, there was no turning back toward a peaceful settlement). Transportation history was presented as a series of felicitous inventions and innovations; the history of Berlin (as a city with a variety of paces and rhythms, made cosmopolitan by different waves of immigrants and settlers) presented in metonymic form by a succession of miniature shoes, from the "folkloric shoes" of 18th century Bohemian immigrants to hiking sandals, 1910 ("Berlinis a stage in the journey of Eastern European Jews on their way to America"); the jackboots of the SA, 1933, and of the visiting Mussolini; Jessie Owen's running shoes, 1936; Red Army boots, 1945; the python cocktail pumps worn by Joan Crawford when she attended the Berlin film festival in 1960, all the way to the "disco night shoe" and 1970s an 1980s "punk boots."

From Mussolini to Joan Crawford: the exhibit failed to present the history of immigration to Berlin in any more serious or systematic way than as a change of

16. The exhibit was not, of course, completely without reference to the lower classes: brief mention was made of professional travellers, such as travelling salesmen, wandering musicians, beggars and gypsies. (Two early 18th century edicts, presented without commentary, proclaimed the need to clear the city of all travelling beggars — to this end, no one must stop the watchmen from laying hands on them. All gypsies who try to enter the city, it declared, will be hanged, with the exception of their children, who will be sent to orphanages.) There were a few pictures from WWII: women and children being evacuated from Berlin; refugees from the East reaching Berlin in advance of the Russian troops; former soldiers and released prisoners of war returning to Berlin in the months after the war ended.

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shoe styles. The influx of huge numbers of guest workers in the last two decades received less than half the space devoted to the transport of wild animals to the Berlin zoo or to those plant species "from elsewhere" which "moved into" and "settled in" Berlin. The exhibit as planned contained no reference at all to the forced emigration from the city during the Third Reich — although in fact thousands of Berliners fled into exile, 50,000 were forcibly transported to concentration camps, and tens of thousands of prisoners from all over Europe passed through Berlin train stations on their way to death.

It is, of course, the habit of the repressed to return with a vengeance: an exhibition whose tone was so self-congratulatory, whose approach was so deliberately "unpolitical," could hardly avoid committing a political *faux pas*. In the entrance to the main hall, the space at the foot of the exhibition ramps was dominated by huge piles of suitcases, their "luggage labels" printed with quotations from the positive and negative observations made about Berlin by famous visitors from Mozart to Lord Eden, from Virginia Woolf to Ilya Ehrenberg.[17] Intended as a clever symbol for the cosmopolitanism of the former capital city, this installation — apparently to the complete surprise of exhibition organizers — was condemned by some visitors as appallingly tasteless, since it called to mind the suitcases piled at the foot of the ramps at Auschwitz. Despite these objections the installation remained standing for the duration of the exhibit, although the organisers did respond to the complaints of the West Berlin Jewish community by allowing a small addition to be made to the exhibit more than two months after it had opened. With little advance warning, a small budget, and with a space at their disposal of about 10 square feet in a corner of one of the last rooms of the exhibit, members of the Jewish community managed to create a very effective anti-exhibit, which not only "supplemented" the information available in the other rooms, but called into question the whole approach and tone of the larger exhibit around it. Here the viewer was finally given concrete information, both about the bureaucratic and psychological difficulties faced by those Berliners who wentnto exile in the 1930s, and about the organization of the "Journey to Death: 'Emigration' (1941-1945)." The "evacuation" of Berlin Jews to the death camps was both documented (with photographs, official correspondence, and scribbled letters of goodbye to family members) and memorialized movingly in a sort of wailing wall made of paper: dim photocopies of a few of the Berlin transport lists, with the names of almost 4000 Berliners. Beside the few remnants of these forced journeys away from Berlin, the many hundreds of exhibited items around it were exposed as trivial: *The Journey to Berlin*, noisy and superficial, was completely undone by the quiet power of its supplement.

17. The 1920 quotation from Ilya Ehrenberg is particularly telling. " 'So, we'll get there at about 10 or 11? . . .' My mother answered me with a smile: 'Here the trains are never late.' I remember that when the train in fact pulled into the Friedrichstrasse trainstation, and looking at the clock, I saw that it was 9:12, I wasn't pleased — no, I was shocked. For the rest of that day, I couldn't in any way recover from the shock of that incomprehensible punctuality — [distracted] neither by the nut cake or by the stores . . . ."

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Suitcases and ramps, mythologies and timetables: if *The Journey to Berlin* was an embarrassing failure, the official anti-exhibit, *Mythos Berlin*, was ambitious. Located on the deserted grounds of the Anhalter Bahnhof, thius exhibit worked backwards from the ruins, seeing itself as an almost Faustian attempt to wrestle with the demons of the German past. It set up a series of psycho-dramatic encounters between the visitor and the vestiges of the past: on one side were old train cars to walk around and walk through;on the other, a row of telephone booths with "history telephones," their receivers endlessly repeating the recordings of famous speeches held in and about Berlin. In the middle, a series of rooms thematized voyeurism (a series of pornographic peep shows) and nostalgia (a *trompe d'oeuil*, an amorphotic "recreation" of the Anhalter Bahnhof as it once was, bathed in rosy light) and explored the experience of the modern city in "the laboratory of urbanity" (a sinister landscape of machines meant to measure the visitor's reflexes and impulses) and "the big city hate room" (a violent sensory overload of strobe-lights, city pictures and sounds). Several rooms devoted themselves more explicitly to the problem of Berlin and history, from a "museum of the end of the modern: Berlin 1912" to a scenic reconstruction of Dix and Grosz pictures from the 1920s, documents about the death of Benno Ohnesorg and the beginnings of the Student Movement, and a "back room of the German soul," which the visitor traversed by walking on a floor of books, a room stuffed full of the grisly souvenirs and nightmare requisites of the German 20th century, guarded by a huge, growling German shepherd, fortunately already dead and stuffed. At the back of the grounds, two installations formed the materials for live events, the twisting and reconstruction of history. In a "happening" that happened shortly after the exhibit opened, Berlin artist Wolf Vostell turned an old train car upside down to create "La Torturga," meant to suggest both the tortoise and torture. For the rest of the summer visitors who walked around the installation heard tape-recorded voices, whispering, singing and screaming out of the train's rusty torso. Live performances, lectures, discussions of historical trends and events, even a sort of "group therapy for Germans and Jews" took place all summer in the "Republican Forum" amphitheater, an architectural eco-sculpture made of turf.

Nevertheless, this list should not give the sense of the exhibition as compact, intense and powerful. In fact, the installations of *Mythos Berlin* were spread thinly throughout a huge, empty outdoor space, and the visitor walked through the void from experience to experience feeling alternately a carnevalesque spirit of expectation, then inexplicably disturbed, then vaguely confused. Part of the exhibition's purpose was clearly to create cathartic encounters, to force viewers to work through their own Nazi impulses, their tendency toward historical voyeurism, their own emotional complicity in the darker sides of city life and Berlin history. But if it forced a confrontation with a city mythology, with official ideologies and personal neuroses, the exhibition itself gave little hint as to what — beyond a counter-mythology — should take its place, or what sort of political

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or therapeutic effect it sought, beyond a sort of open-ended and subjective "exploration" of the problems of representation, experience, history. For it was as critical of the self-styled "forces of Enlightenment" as it was of the mythologizers of the past, refusing all recourse to rationalistic or expository modes of presentation and implicitly condemning the notion of museum pedagogy as authoritarian and manipulative, striving always for a photogenic conversion to knowledge, a deceptive closure. With great deliberateness, it both aesthetically and politically unfocussed. In the abstract, such open-endedness was perhaps laudable, if a bit pointless; in the concrete circumstances of Berlin in 1987, it was highly problematic. In a political moment characterized at once by an increasing tendency for German officials to relativize and excuse the German past (the Germans pardon themselves, Berlin celebrates its birthday, the train-stations are full of tourists again) and a growing fascination with Nazism among young Germans, exhibition strategies that saw themselves as post-Enlightenment risked affirming the government's official embrace of a de-politicized pluralism.

Mythos Berlin illustrated how a well-intentioned post-modernism ended up as a renewed attempt to separate the aesthetic from the political. The exhibit included the results of an international competition that asked artists to reconceptualize the Berlin Wall as art, as a way of integrating it into the city. Displayed only a few blocks from the wall itself, and hung quite literally "on an iron curtain," the artists' drawings included suggestions that the Wall be reconceived as a sculpture, that a further wall be added in order to create a "free space" between the two states, that it become a concrete collage, pasted with images taken from all of Western art. Some of these proposals were less frivolous than others. Like the idea of such a "competition" itself, however, most worked to aesthetize the fact of political division, turning the Wall into a landmark, a city mascot, a symbol devoid of real significance.[18] They neither took seriously the human suffering occasioned by the building of the Wall, nor did they make any attempt to work through its political motivations or consequences. Seen in concrete terms, the building of the Wall divided families, split irrevocably the German Left, and shattered the (fiction of a) nation, in the name of consolidating a socialism that, by almost all accounts, whatever its success in changing the structures of the workplace and the state, has failed utterly to replace traditional family and patriotic alliances. For 25 years now, the existence of the Wall has fueled the grim anti-communism of most elderly Berliners, has provided the Right with continual material for Cold War rhetoric (from the photograph in the early 1960s of white Pretoria schoolboys looking aghast at communist deprivation of liberty, to Reagan's speech for the occasion: standing in front of the triumphal arch of

18. Life imitates art: see Gerd Thorns' short article, "Die neueste Geschichtsattrappe: Auf dem Wege zur Potemkinisierung Berlins: Ob echt, ob falsch, Mauern gab es hier schon immer," in the Berlin edition of the *Tageszeitung*, (November 2, 1987, p. 24), for an account of an embarassing anniversary fiasco — an ill-planned project to excavate and reconstruct portions of the "historical Berlin toll wall."

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Prussia, the now walled-in Brandenburg Gate, he addressed a rhetorical plea to Gorbachev to "open the gate!" and suggested that if the West German Left persisted in complaining about state power and about his visit, that "they should go back to East Germany and see if they liked that any better . . ."). Although the Western Left clearly must continue to resist being pushed into an apologist role, it has little to gain by trivializing the Wall's existence or abandoning all attempts to give some historical context for the situation that led to its building.

Context and history: located next to the history telephones, Claudio Lange's "The End of the Modern — Berlin 1912" attempted (as one gathered from the catalogue)[19] to expose the traditional museum exhibit and the traditional writing of art history as the aesthetized site of complicated power relations, imperialists and industrialists paying homage to the colonial and pre-industrial cultures they have exterminated and out-lived: *veni, vidi, vici*. But the museum and the historiography which Lange meant to take their place were equally guilty of aestheticizing and de-politicizing their subjects. There was little historical or even temporal specificity to his exhibit: "1912" and "Berlin" had no existence as a delimited period of time, a politically constituted space. Within the small exhibition room, our attention was shifted back and forth between quotations by Viennese authors (Karl Kraus and Joseph Roth) from the 1920s, a shlocky three dimensional re-staging of a 1898 painting of "The Plague" by Böcklin, music by Schönberg, pictures of monuments to Otto Lilienthal constructed by his contemporaries. Most troubling in all this jumble of quotations were Lange's own homages to Rosa Luxemburg, presented in what was doubtlessly meant as surrealistist and dadaist style: a kind of automatic writing or word processing done on his MacIntosh computer ("imagine the corpse of Rosa Luxemburg transparent and filled up with potato chips"), and a display case containing a plastic water wing (a kitsch emblem of Luxemburg's death: murdered along with Karl Liebknecht by right-wing officers in 1917, her corpse was thrown into a Berlin canal).

The point of the exhibit was apparently to dismantle Berlin's proud claims to a "modernism" that it sees as its most dynamic cultural legacy. The avant-garde production of the Weimar Republic, the exhibit argued, is already a post-modernism, imported into Berlin after the war by immigrants and visitors: Viennese decadence is the original, Berlin dada only the imitation. The exhibit, however, not only called into question the usual periodization of art history, but went on to castigate the Berlin revolutionaries of the 1920s for failing to foresee this contemporary reinterpretation and for the ultimate failure of the Left. As Lange wrote in his accompanying catalogue, with the considerable advantage of hindsight: "Rosa Luxemburg settled in the Berlin-Utopia-Berlin as the beginning of a socialist mankind — although her journeys into revolutionary, pre-Bolshevik Russia and her time in prison in the German empire, like her experi-

19. Claudio Lange, *Museum der Utopian vom Überleben* (Berlin: Transit Verlag, 1987).

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ences and confrontations with the German Social Democrats . . . . should have driven out of her the notion of Berlin as concrete utopia. Rosa Luxemburg is a Berlin-Utopianist, who never got free of Berlin-Utopia, and paid with her life . . . Rosa Luxemburg never understood the German loyalty to the emperor. She must have been blind to everything written in her time in prose and verse by foreigners like herself . . ."[20] What if she was too busy organizing a revolution to immerse herself in belletristic production, and to read the radical conservatives so much admired by Lange? Art historical homage replaced by defamation, the plastic water-wing: to imagine Rosa Luxemburg transparent and full of potato chips is as bad as imagining her looking out of the window, obsessing endlessly about her love life (as Margareta von Trotta had a tendency to do in her "feminist" film biography, *Rosa Luxemburg*). Both kinds of representation — romantic bio-pic and post-modernist chic-shock — fail to imagine her addressing a contemporary public, working within a struggle.

In the name of a progressive post-modernity, "The End of the Modern" offered a studied homage to a mythologized modernity in Vienna, but avoided reclaiming the political aspects of modernism in Berlin. Lange's catalogue loudly declared the aesthetic sanctum of the traditional museum to be permeated by power relations, but was then unwilling or unable to situate cultural history within a political landscape, presenting it instead as a hermetically-sealed world of intertextuality and a set of successful or failed relations between canonized personalities. (As Klaus Mann said when he ran into Hitler in a bar; as Rosa Luxemburg said, having failed to read Karl Kraus . . .). In the meantime, the other end of Kreuzberg, only two or three miles away, has become a stronghold of a new "spontanism," influenced by Luxemburgian as well as anarchist and situationist traditions. For all the political cynicism and fatalism of post-modernists like Lange, it is not at all clear that the "spontinists" can be dismissed merely as derivative, their ideas as merely an obsolete homage to a revolutionary tradition itself apparently outdated (according to Lange) before the revolutions of the 20th century had even begun. For the "Autonomen" and the "Alternativen" are not only political phenomena, but increasingly political forces of some strength. Some of their actions even call upon a popular historical memory, but their notion of memory, history and populism are very different from those invoked by any of the city's official spectacles. In spring 1987, for instance, after intensive local consciousness-raising campaigns, at least 130,000 Berliners committed a new kind of civil disobedience, joining in a nation-wide boycott of the 1987 census. The official plan was that the computerized census data — gathering from every resident of West Germany and West Berlin name, address, citizenship, religion, education, commuting time to work, and so on — would be used on every level of city and state planning but at the same time remain confidential and protected from any misuse. Boycott organizers and participants objected in

20. *Ibid.* p. 115.

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principle to the state's systematic collection of personal information, arguing that government computers already contain an extensive data base for the whole population (all legal resident of West Germany are already obligated to be registered with the local police). They also expressed grave concern about the promised "safe-guarding" of the data: Berlin residents reminded the government that the four occupation forces would legally have access to all data gathered in West Berlin, and boycott partecipants all over West Germany pointed to past and present misuses of computerized information. Apparently no one had forgotten the 1970s when, in the wake of the terrorist "scare" and the computerization of police files, people known to be Leftists were systematically refused positions in the civil service, including the school system. No one had forgotten the 1930s, to judge from the public discussions about Nazi abuses of the census results of 1933 and 1937: the information they provided, in particular in answer to the question about religious affiliation, made it a simple matter to compose systematic lists with the name and address of every Jew in Germany and thereafter to organize Jewish transports to the death-camps by city, neighborhood and block.

In 1987, apparently oblivious to these precedents, central and local governments tended to deal harshly with boycott organizers and participants, authorizing police searches and raids of boycott information centers, banning in some localities the sale of handbooks giving legal advice to boycotters, and announcing its intention to fine heavily or even to prosecute all those who refused to fill out their census questionnaires completely and correctly. Since the general strategy had been to characterize all boycotters as "opponents of the state" (just as the city government of West Berlin persisted in characterizing those who protested the scope or scale of the anniversary celebrations as "anti-Berliners"), the government statistics agency seemed genuinely embarassed to receive back the census questionaires of a number of elderly Jewish citizens, who in lieu of answering the questions had filled in the blanks with drawings of the "Jewish stars" they had once been forced to wear, or with complete lists of murdered family members. Such reproaches were seen as regrettable but understandable, and Jewish residents were finally offered an official concession, due to their troubled history on German soil — they alone were excused from answering the question about religious affiliation, and could leave it blank. Naturally, this did not seem to anyone much of a solution, since it was even easier to compile a black list of the few who abstained than the many who answered.

History in the Kitchen

Berlin, Berlin: if the official exhibits[21] achieved their authority at the price of

21. The following is a list of the exhibits discussed. Each has at least one accompanying catalogue. *Berlin, Berlin*, *op. cit.*; *Alfred Döblin zum Beispiel — Stadt und Literatur — Die Reise Nach Berlin*, *op. cit.*, *Mythos Berlin* and *Mythos Berlin Concepte* (Berlin: Ästhetik und Kommunikation, 1987); Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, . . . *es begann*

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human scale, their populism or their cathartic effect at the price of any meaningful or constructive engagement with their material, a number of ambitious and challenging smaller exhibits managed to side-step many of these dangers. Several art exhibits showed a post-modernism with a political and critical edge: a series of evocative and theatrically-staged historical rooms, *Packing Ice and Pressed Glass*, for example, examined the ideological contradictions of the successive arts and crafts movements that accompanied and occluded the industrialization of Germany in the 19th century. *Waldungen: The Germans and their Forests*, on the other hand, took as its starting point a single cultural icon, and successfully used post-modernist exhibition techniques to produce a variety of historical and political resonances. Walls and floors were overed with wood, the exhibit's central room filled at once with the noises of trees and winds (an eco-sound piece named for the Aolian Harp so beloved to the Romantic imagination) and with a huge variety of visual representations of the forest, grouped in a series of thickets and clearings. The German forest served as the site of fantasies about the primival and the cathedral, the natural and the national, the life-giving and the dangerous. The exhibit gathered German arts and artefacts from the last two centuries: Romantic, Expressionist, Nazi and Neo-expressionist, history paintings and late 19th century illustrations for children's books; family trees, families and lovers strolling in the forest; the Christian missionaries converting the Germanic tribes in the *Urwald* (primeval forest); Hitler in *Lederhosen* (short leather pants) standing in a forest, Olympic athletes crowned with laurels, scenes from a Nazi film about the forest battles of WWI in which rows of soldiers metamorphose into rows of trees and back again.

One review in a Leftist newspaper complained of the exhibit's failure to separate *Kunst* from *Kultur*, art from culture, charging that it put kitsch in the foreground and left Anselm Kiefer's painting *Varus* half-forgotten in a corner.[22] What was most provocative and interesting about the exhibit was precisely its refusal to separate its exponents into high and low culture, original and derivative, and its efforts instead to plunge the viewer into a bewildering undergrowth of

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in Berlin: Bilder und Dokumente aus der Deutschen Sozialgeschichte; Verkbund-Archiv und Museum der Alltagskultur des 20. Jahrhunderts, *Packeis und Pressglas: Von der Kunstgewerbebewegung zum Deutschen Werkbund* , Werkbund-Archiv, 16, (Anabas Verlag, 1987); Akademie der Künste, *Waldungen: Die Deutschen und Ihr Wald* (Berlin: Akademie-Katalog 19); BerlinerFrauenKulturInitiative e. V. in the Künstlerhaus Bethanian, *Kein Ort Nirgends: 200 Jahre Frauenbewegung*; Kunstamt Schöneberg, *Vergnünsgewerbe rund um den Bülowbogen*; Mobiles Museum — Vergessene Geschichte, *Euthanasie-Aktion T-4*; Pädagogisches Museum, *Ich Bin Kein Berliner: Minderheiten in der Schule*; Evangelische Kirche/Kirchenkreis Wedding, *Roter Wedding, Toter Wedding*; Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt, *"Das war 'ne ganz geschlossene Gesellschaft hier." Der Lindenhof. Eine Genossenschafts-Siedlung in der Großstadt* (see also their two other exhibition catalogues from this year: *Wedding — hart an der Grenze* and *Die rote Insel*);Trotz und Taum, e. V. *100 Jahre Sozialgeschichte rund um Riehmers Hofgarten*; Neuköllner Kulturverein, *Vom Ilsenhof zur High-Deck Siedlung*.

22. Arno Widmann, "Den Wald vor Bäumen nicht," Berlin edition of the *Tageszeitung*, (Thursday, October 22, 1987), pp. 11-12.

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cultural iconography. An Aolian harp sifting different winds, some of them ill, the exhibit forced a subtle but persistent confrontation of apparently heterogenous materials. In fact, the forest and the trees cannot so easily be told apart; "high art" and kitsch, romantic cultivation and Nazi domination are seen here as inter-locking, mutually supporting parts of a single cultural and ideological system. Here, the history of German art did not appear in its usual tidy periods but, presented instead in a series of startling juxtapositions, emerged as a highly complex set of aesthetic and political continuities and discontinuities. Neo-Expressionist painting rightly found itself on the side-lines here; in this company, the art of Kiefer and Hödicke appeared as icily anti-mythological. In *Varus*, the Teutoburger Forest (scene of the Hermannschlacht, the famous battle in which Germanic tribes fought the Roman armies) is devoid of any human combatants. In their place, imposed on a blue-gray vista of barren trees, are trails of blood and a nest of names — the names of the poets and the political figures who, from the romantic period on, appropriated and reinterpreted the story of the battle. The historical event itself is thus rendered invisible, disappearing beneath the interpretive and ideological overlays, beneath its history of reception.

The *Waldungen* exhibit took place under the sign of the much-discussed death of the German forests as a result of environmental pollution. On the edges of the main room, contemporary examples of eco-art confronted the immanent death of the natural: for part of every hour, the Aolian winds were drowned out by the sounds of car motors at nauseating volume, offering a full audio-visual reconstruction of a stretch of highway on the edge of a forest. In the next room, an elaborate audio-system broadcasted the noises made by a row of tiny plants: songs without words, made audible to human ears by the same technological breakthroughs that perhaps doom the plants and the planet. Eco-art appeared in this context as an art movement which, for all its earnestness of purpose and vital political message, was impaired (though perhaps not invalidated) by its inability to find a conceptual framework to discuss nature and the natural that will ever be completely free from the legacy of romanticism, of blood and soil.

If *Waldungen* did not exempt even "progressive" political movements from its critical juxtapositions, a number of politically-progressive exhibits strove for a more positive analysis. Unlike the large and expensive "official" exhibits, which were meant to put Berlin history on the international cultural map (and which indeed were reviewed all over West Germany and visited by thousands upon thousands of tourists and Berliners), these "alternative" exhibits tended to be modest in scale and in budget (often relying on the volunteer labor of the community), deliberately local both in subject matter and in their targeted audience. Sponsored by political and feminist groups, neighborhood organizations and church groups, union locals and the Leftist "Berlin History Workshop" (a coalition of professionally-trained historians committed both to a "history from below" and to collaboration with local groups and history buffs), and set up

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for short periods in church halls, schools or tents in "remote" corners of the city far from the usual cultural centers, these exhibits poked around in several forgotten corners of Berlin history and in a few backrooms of the German soul to come up with some fascinating answers to the kinds of questions left unspoken in the official exhibits — the problems of continuity and discontinuity, the relation of historiographical narrative and life experience.

"No lovingly created worker's kitchen (with imitation dry rot made of acryllic paint) will disturb the concentration on the individual exhibition pieces": the creators of *Berlin, Berlin* pointedly distanced themselves from historical reconstruction, which they epitomized with the figure of the reconstructed slum kitchen, its "authentic squalor" spread on thick. Their specific target was probably either *Es begann in Berlin: Bilder und Dokumente aus der Deutschen Sozialgeschichte*, an exhibition put on in May and June 1987 by the Federal Minister for Work and Social Welfare (which included a "reconstructed workers' kitchen illustrating the living conditions of people around 1880"), or *Big City Proletariat around 1900*, a semi-permanent exhibit of the East Berlin German Folklore Museum in the basement of the Pergamon. In any case, it can be understood more generally as a critique of exhibition strategies it saw as bogged down in an outdated "socialist realism," their pedagogy based on easy identification, their ability to represent historical complexity limited by their political engagement. It was a critique which (characteristically enough, given *Berlin, Berlin*'s valorization of the individual exponent as an aesthetic object) ignored or discounted the institutional, social and political context of institutions.[23]

The kitchen, whether fully reconstructed or merely evoked, polemical or polysemous, figured prominently in many of the alternative West Berlin exhibits, whether their subject was the politics of housing or women's work in the home. An "embroidery" exhibit put on in a working class neighborhood by a local women's consciousness-raising group underlined their collective rejection of inherited beliefs by displaying traditional kitchen table clothes, aprons and samplers, whose images and sayings about "a women's place" in the household and in the marriage bed have been "improved upon," embroidered over with feminist slogans. *No Place, Nowhere: 200 Years of the Women's Movement* (a larger exhibit organized by the Berlin feminist community and addressed primarily to it) examines successive waves of feminist activity, trying to establish continuities and discontinuities in their class alliances, their theories of femininity, their attitudes

23. In fact, the efforts of the East Berlin exhibit to reconstruct historical living conditions is part of a long overdue attempt to understand the working class culture they produced; the exhibit also needs to be understood within the institutional context of the upheavals in folklore studies in the East and West during the last 20 years (and within a country still plagued by housing problems) as an important effort to shift the study of German "folklore" away from the conservationist collection of "rural vestiges of age-old traditions" toward a more systematic and politicized analysis of everyday life, rural and urban. See Erika Karasek et al, *Großstadtproletariat: Zur Lebensweise einer Klasse* (Berlin: Museum für Deutsche Volkskunde, 1983).

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towards prostitution and abortion as social problems. A slide show in the middle of the exhibition room presented complicated disparities between image and accompanying sound, narrating texts from the 19th century, while showing advertisements from the 1960s: though the exhibition was in some ways conceptually over-extended, it was successful in both suggesting and problematizing the notion of "intellectual motherhood." Its triumphant centerpiece forced the viewer to grasp the constants of women's history over the last 200 years in concrete terms; it was — what else — a full scale model of mother's kitchen, complete with garbage pail, mop, jam jars, tea towels and a wall of shopping lists.

The Nazi era and its legacy, a touchy subject often rushed past in the official history exhibits, tended to be examined with particular attention by its smaller counterparts, not least because it was an era in which the interpenetration of personal and public spheres became most explicit. An important exhibit on the history of ethnic minorities in Berlin (*Ich bin kein Berliner*) focussed on the role of the school system in consolidating or destroying ethnic identity; it was particularly thorough in its account of the removal of Jewish students from the public schools during the Nazi era, and in its history of German persecution of the gypsies (providing especially detailed information about their detention on the outskirts of Berlin beginning in the year of the 700th anniversary celebrations — whatever the average Berliner may or may not have known about the extermination of the Jews, the internment of the gypsies was reported in every newspaper). The exhibit did not hesitate to draw connections between the Nazi use of "racially inferior populations" as slave laborers during the war and the postwar "import" of cheap labor from Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey.

Another exhibit recalled an important means by which new media and new messages entered many German homes in the Nazi period: a program of subsidized *Volksempfänger* made radio receivers affordable to working class families for the first time. The larger theme of the exhibit was the transmission and reception history of another kind of message — church teachings and the Protestant church in Berlin, as an institution which acted as a conservative force during much of the 19th and 20th centuries and then unexpectedly, for moments during the Nazi era, as a force of resistance. Located in an early 19th century church in a historically working-class district, the exhibition was organized around a reconstruction of the changing fortunes of a fictional neighborhood family from 1835 to 1947; interested youth groups were invited to use the local story it developed to experiment for themselves with various ways of chronicling history, from a walkman tour of the district to video interviews with exhibit organizers dressed up as "family members" from different eras. The exhibit itself reflected and played with the space of the church in similarly innovative ways, while focussing on the ways church policies and church politics formed the attitudes of many parishioners toward the social, political and revolutionary upheavals taking place around them. Exploring in particular the church's role in maintaining

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exploitative structures by the bandaid relief it offered in the forms of charity and faith (church "soup kitchens" played a particularly important role in this parish), the exhibit ended up in the kitchen, inviting the public to a free hand-out of malt coffee and lard-smeared bread, to be eaten while digesting the implications both of the exhibit and traditional forms of charity.

A number of equally-satisfying exhibits focused on the political history of housing in Berlin, from housing speculation in the city center and the formation of self-consciously working-class neighborhoods during the 19th century, to the social housing of the 20th century, erected at the city edges in a variety of forms and in a variety of party interests from communist to Nazi. One of the most fascinating exhibits, organized by the Berlin History Workshop, traced the changing fortunes of Lindenhof, the oldest "garden colony" and cooperative building society in Berlin. (Founded by and for utopian socialists in the early 1920s, the colony developed a strong sense of community which could only be partly destroyed by Nazi persecution in the 1930s; although several community leaders were sent to concentration camps, other community members remained active in the Resistance.) The exhibition itself consisted of several constrasting kinds of installations. The visitor was invited to walk around the grounds of the current settlement, comparing past and present structures. Inside the main exhibition tent, family photographs were analyzed and a number of exemplary life stories reconstructed, giving a sense of the shifts and the crises in community life. A small display in an empty apartment examined both the physical space in which community families lived (the settlement's kitchens were much-envied for their running water!) and the way in which elderly community members now recount their life in the settlement. A series of tapes with oral history interviews — autobiographical narratives punctuated and occasionally drowned out by the clang of dishes or the singing of the canary in the kitchen — were analyzed in a series of charts and historical/personal life-lines which attempted to understand how the speakers themselves viewed and re-constructed the now "historical" epochs they had lived through. The speakers' way of organizing their autobiographical narrative to juxtapose personal and public events, their tendency to periodize the past into "good times" and "bad times" according economic prosperity: what was being analyzed was the way in which an individual sense of historical memory actually functions.

"Pocket calendars can be valuable sources of historical information!" The somewhat surprised proclamation of one neighborhood history exhibit (which went on to ascertain, among other things, the year in which Jewish holidays disappeared from German calendars, never to return) could stand for many of the alternative exhibits, their goal to explore the history all around us. One working- class neighborhood even sponsered a series of oral history evenings, during which elderly residents were asked to tell the story of their life in the neighborhood, to be commented on and added to by neighbors in the audience. No straw was too short to save, no detail of everyday life without its historical

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connections and political significance: in some ways the alternative exhibits, this history in and of the kitchen, represented the aesthetic or the pedagogical equivalent of the city's "autonomous" political movements, combining a critique both of the power structure and the representational strategies of official institutions with an intense interest in life-style, individual consciousness, everyday practices as a site of resistance.

The autonomous movements could in some ways be understood as a fight for the kitchen: a fight to keep the state (in the form of the census taker) out of the kitchen, and a fight for their own occupied kitchens (the squatters' movement in many ways succeeded in re-politicizing a whole city around the politics of architecture and city planning). The small scale that makes such struggle so appealling is also, in many ways, its danger. Groups fighting within their own kitchen about the division of household labor, about the politics of food, the kitchen (or for that matter, Kreuzberg or Berlin) re-fashioned as an autonomous sphere — does the creation of such free zones, such breathing spaces destroy or keep alive the hope of structural change in society at large?

Creative Unrest and Cultural Warfare or Nathan in the Zoo: Goethe in Chains

In West Berlin, an official publication claims: "Tthe arts play a leading role in exchange and encounter. The atmosphere of the city encourages creative unrest and development. Special promotion of the arts is designed to intensify Berlin's magnetism and appeal."[24] But how, in an age of graffiti art and government subsidization, is the observer to distinguish creative unrest from cultural warfare? The difficulty in describing West Berlin is to make a set of observations, while avoiding the urge to reach any satisfying conclusions. A set of traps: the conclusion that the many debates over historical issues, the controversies that surrounded the anniversary celebrations and perhaps even the celebrations themselves, are positive signs that the Germans are finally working through their history in all of its complexity; or, alternatively, that the many debates over historical issues could not succeed either in reaching and changing the consciousness of a wider public or in forcing any change in the mode of official representations, that the protests over the anniversary celebrations could not stop the celebrations from going on anyway; that thousands of hours were spent putting together neighborhood exhibits to which hardly anyone came (the tourists were all at the official ones); that the endless controversies and debates about representation use up all the energy of the Left. The situation is probably somewhere in between the most optimistic and the most pessimistic assessment. So how to conclude, in lieu of an opinion poll? Here are a set of positions, anecdotes and questions.

Through blockades and border-building, West Berlin has been subsidized and supported for decades as an ideologically-crucial "show-cases of the West" — if for years the featured display was "democracy," the popular production of

24. *Outlook Berlin*, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

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government, now it is more and more post-modern style, the "autonomous" production of an art cut loose from history being offered for show and export. How is a city of culture and the museum exhibits to overcome a tradition of protecting, reifying, and monumentalizing cultural artifacts, of affirming the historiography of state? Can the post-modern get past its aesthetic embrace of the ruinous and the monumental and reclaim some sort of "progressive" potential? Does post-modernism in West Berlin need to be understood as a refusal not only of the "socialist" reality and the socialist realism that lie beyond the Eastern wall of the city but of all the oppositional traditions that East German "really existing socialism" appropriates and uses to legitimate itself?

The city government with its subway campaign, the official history exhibition only yards away from the old Gestapo Headquarters, claimed for Berlin "a tradition of tolerance broken only by the Nazi seizure of power," highlighting the city's history of relative toleration of Jewish, Hugeunotand Catholic minorities. Yet the gypsies, who have been persecuted in Prussia as elsewhere since the Middle Ages, were interned here for 6 years on the city outskirts before being transported to Auschwitz.[25] Already in the 18th century Moses Mendelssohn, arriving in Berlin for the first time, was turned away at gate after gate of the city beause he was a Jew. An outdoor production last summer took Lessing's Enlightenment drama *Nathan the Wise* (a famous plea for toleration between Christians, Jews and Moslems; its main figure based on Mendelssohn himself) and staged it on the grounds of the zoological garden, along the new and old walls of the city where Mendelssohn was refused admission. *Nathan in the Zoo*: the "legacy of Enlightenment" is revealed as a history of violence. Spectators were transported from scene to scene, herded onto trucks, jostled and thrown about, meant to be shaken up, imaginatively experiencing the intolerable persecution of minorities. If, 40 years after Auschwitz the state smugly appropriates for itself tradition, a tradition of Enlightenment, the intellectuals find themselves denouncing and renouncing all Enlightement values and retreating to a position of absolute cultural pessimism.

Nathan the Wise: the attempt of art to create an autonomous sphere, to create a utopian realm beyond political realities, the political betrayals of the day. *Nathan in the Zoo*: the attempt of art to create an autonomous sphere, to create a critical, dystopic realm beyond the state's fiction of its own origins, beyond the official celebrations of the day. What would a truly autonomous sphere look life? West Berlin: the *Autonomen* (the celebration of the autonomy of art by the British high commander and the Shakespeare fan club) meet the *Autonomen* (the *spontis* gathered

25. The discrimination against them continues to the present day: unlike other ethnic and religious groups persecuted and murdered by the Nazis, the gypsies are still fighting to receive any compensation from the West German government. The public debates surrounding the census boycott this year revealed, among other things that the West German police keep special track in their computers of gyspy ethnics; although they no longer explicitly designate gypsy registrants with the letter "Z" for *Zigeuner*, they still mark and differentiate their files with the note "frequent changes in place of residence."

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to mourn Benno Ohnesorg and to honor a tradition of resistance). Can a culture of violence succeed in matching the culture of the state, the violence of the state, the violence of the state through culture?

In West Berlin, as in West Germany, class identity, class mobility and class hierarchy are still regulated almost exclusively by a divided school system, which has successfully resisted Leftist attempts of the 1960s and 1970s to restructure it in the name of equal access and social justice into a system of composite, comprehensive schools with a radically-revised curriculum. In a society in which, for over a century a major distinguishing characteristic of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, the educated *haute bourgeois*, has been their ability to quote *Faust I* and *II*, even apparently innocuous decisions to refurbish or restore the city's monuments to high culture are widely understood as the expression of class interests. Thus a large statue of Goethe, recently restored and resurrected in the large park between the zoo and the Wall, has become the target of a recurrent "smear campaign," despite police attempts to shield it. Goethe's face and body are flecked with blotches of pink paint, while the four muses kneeling at his feet have black bandages painted over their eyes, and the base of the statue is covered with anarchist and feminist slogans. But the statue is defaced less by these attacks than by the official attempts to guard it: it now stands surrounded by a tall chain-link fence, itself topped with thick layers of barbed wire. Like the city around it, Goethe sits enthroned here in the chains of protective custody.

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Stalin and Hoxha: The Master and the Apprentice

Arshi Pipa

Something is happening in the Soviet Union. One wonders whether it is a remodeling of the outdated Soviet system, or a real "reconstruction," the term used by its ambitious and somewhat pretentious champion. One can accept with less reservation the other parameter of his "new thinking," i.e., "openness," its main thrust being the reexamination and definition of the Stalin myth.[1] From this perspective, *glasnost* is an attempt to retrieve the meaning of history which, during the Stalin era and also the Brezhnev period was perverted into a narrative of gross falsifications and forgeries of all sorts. An example may suffice. In 1970, the Moscow Progress Publishers issued *A Short History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* by a team of Soviet historians under the direction of B. N. Ponomarev. The book exalts Lenin as the architect of Soviet Communism while being completely silent about Stalin, whose name is not even mentioned (Brezhnev's is, by the way). We thus have a history of the Soviet Union without Stalin — one could as well speak of a house without a roof, or a car without a steering wheel.

While Stalin's cult merely waned during the 'thaw' interlude, due to Khrushchev's desecration of the dictator's icon, Gorbachev's initiative could lead to dumping it. Joining a campaign inaugurated by some radical historians, Gorbachev has accused Stalin of "violations of law (with) tragic consequences."[2] His

1. "But the period which we call the personality-cult period affected our laws. . . . This led to arbitrary rule and the reign of lawlessness. Stalin and his close associates are responsible for those methods of governing the country. Any attempts to justify that lawlessness by political needs, international tension or alleged exacerbation of class struggle in the country are wrong." Mikhail Gorbachev in *Perestroika, New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), excerpts in *U. S. News & World Report*, Nov. 9,1987, p. 71.

2. *Ibid.*

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daring move has met with considerable popular support in the Soviet Union, while being coldly received in the Warsaw Pact countries, whose leaderships perceive it as a threat to their power. One can surmise acerbic reactions by the more unpopular leaderships in those countries. Albania, let us recall, broke loose from the Soviet bloc when Khrushchev pressed the Hoxha-Shehu tandem to reconcile with Tito, which they felt as marking the end of their duumvirate and therefore pushing them over to China. Such adventuristic changing of sides is probably an extreme case, typical of politically immature leaderships. Nonetheless if 'reconstruction' obtains in the Soviet Union, restructurings of parts of the Soviet empire are bound to occur.

Ever since it rejected Yugoslavia's tutelage, Albania has been moving erratically in eastward orbits, circling first one and then the other sun, and ending up swirling. Despite these twists and turns, Albania remains a Stalinist country, the only one in Europe where Stalin's memory continues to haunt every mind. The question arises: if the saga of Stalin as the builder of the greatness of the Soviet Union is liquidated there, what will happen to the legacy of Hoxha, his "heir" and the architect of Stalinist Albania?

Before answering this question, let us see whether the poet Yevgeni Yevtushenko's description of Hoxha as Stalin's most faithful "heir"[3] is accurate. In his book, *With Stalin*,[4] published in 1979, i.e., in the same year as *Imperialism and Revolution*, Hoxha's most representative "theoretical" work, he extols Stalin for "his stern and principled struggle for the defence, consistent implementation and further development of the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin" (6), "his great work without precedent in history" (12), defends him from "slanders" such as "bloody tyrant" and "murderer" (14), while pointing out his "brilliant mind and pure soul" (16), his "exhilarating laugh that went right to one's heart" (146), "his voice so warm and inspiring" (219). Just as "before the body of Lenin, Stalin pledged that he would loyally follow his teachings" (10), when Stalin died, Hoxha, in the name of the Albanian people, "sign(ed) the Oath . . . "[5] "to carry out (his) instructions."[6]

And in general he kept his word. He gave priority to the industrialization of an overwhelmingly agrarian country while pushing hard for its thorough

3. "And I turn to our government with a request: slab, to double, treble the guards over that gravestone so that Stalin should not rise, and with Stalin — the past. . . . It seems to me to that coffin a telephone's connected: to Enver Hoxha Stalin transmits his latest edicts. To where else is that direct line linked up?" Yevgeny Yevtushenko in "The Heirs of Stalin," in Tariq Ali, *The Stalinist Legacy* (London: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 549.

4. Enver Hoxha, *With Stalin* (Tirana: Institute of Marxist-Lenninist Studies at the CC of the PLA [IMLS], 1978).

5. A photo page after p. 208 in *With Stalin* shows "Comrade Enver Hoxha signing the Oath of the Albanian People on the occasion of the death of Joseph Stalin, March 10, 1953."

6. " 'We shall certainly carry out your instructions, Comrade Stalin!' I said . . . . " (*Ibid.*, p. 216).

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collectivization, achieved with methods similar to those used in the Soviet Union. He organized the army and the State Security apparatus according to strictly Stalinist patterns. He all but copied the Soviet school system, and imposed on literature and the arts the Stalinist dogma of "socialist realism" Stalin's theses on Soviet linguistics inform the language reform of the so-called "unified literary Albanian." Last but not least, Hoxha submitted the Party to a series of ruthless typically Stalinist purges,[7] which led to his being glorified as the genius of the Albanian revolution and the father of modern Albania.

This is not to say that Hoxha imitated Stalin in everything Stalin did. Unlike Stalin, Hoxha dressed elegantly while also affecting French manners. Stalin's despotism was all grounded on terror, whereas Hoxha could charm people with his joviality and eloquence. On the other hand, he lacked his master's prudence and cool bearing, as made clear by his declaring Albania the first atheistic country in the history of mankind — Stalin would not commit that blunder. There are a few more differences between the two, but despite those differences, Hoxha was indeed Stalin's most faithful disciple in at least four respects.

Just like Stalin, Hoxha built his personality cult through consecutive Party purges mainly by playing his rivals against each other. He first allied himself to Koçi Xoxe, then the Party's strongman, to eliminate Sejfulla Malëshova, the only Albanian communist leader with a Marxist theoretical background. He then pushed to suicide Nako Spiru, the talented young Minister of Economy, whose head was wanted by Xoxe. Next he liquidated Xoxe by joining Mehmet Shehu, a popular military hero. "The artful Albanian" had Shehu, first as Minister of Interior and later as Premier, do the dirty job of repressing all kinds of dissidents and deviators, including the former Minister of Education, Fadil Paçrami, an innovative playwright much admired by the youth. Finally the dictator turned against his longtime faithful collaborator, accusing him of being a "superagent" of imperialism (Shehu allegedly committed suicide). Hoxha's way to dictatorship, just like Stalin's, is strewn with the corpses of his actual or potential rivals.

Like Stalin, Hoxha suffered from megalomania, the kind characteristic of mediocrities striving to cover their inferiority complex by posing as superior beings. The Bolshevik leaders Stalin liquidated: Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, to name the most important among them, by far outdid Stalin in statesmanship and creative power. Envious of their superiority of mind and culture, he tried hard to prove himself equal as a Marxist theoretician while pretending to be the sole heir to Lenin, although Lenin's testament mentions Bukharin as such, while criticizing Stalin for his "duress." Driven by his ambition to be hailed as the theoretician of Marxism-Leninism (his name for Stalinism), the former seminarist wrote authoritatively on Soviet economy and, in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the Soviet armed forces during WWII, dabbled

7. See Arshi Pipa, "Party Ideology and Purges in Albania," *Telos* 59 (Spring 1984), pp. 69-100.

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in military theory. He even reached out to legislating over areas totally extraneous to his interests. It was Stalin who, together with Gorki, concocted the doctrine of "socialist realism." And it was Stalin who reformed Soviet linguistics by demolishing Marx' concept of language as a superstructural phenomenon with class character. Hoxha imitated his master by dabbling in all these areas and in others, too, such as history (he wrote several books of memoirs), education (he had taught French for some time) and also religion. Being no genius and also half-educated (he dropped his university studies, and only in his old age read and wrote extensively), he could enunciate trite and half-cooked judgments, but never a deep, let alone original, thought.[8] His sporadic attempts to deal with Marxist theory show him poorly acquainted with even its basics — in this much inferior to Stalin, who could sustain his arguments with pedantic logic couched in catechistic style. Hoxha was so insignificant a theoretician of Marxism that his "teachings" did not even invite elaboration by his devotees, who have been merely uncritically parroting him. And since it was he who held the monopoly of Marxism-Leninism in his country, Albanian Diamat (dialectic materialism) is of the lowest quality, and Albania the only communist country in Eastern Europe where Marxist theory is at zero level.

A "bloody tyrant" as a statesman and a half-educated mediocrity as an intellectual, Hoxha resembles Stalin also for his unprincipled Byzantine-style Machiavellianism. After siding with the Bukharin-led faction against the Trotsky-Zinoviev "left" opposition and liquidating the latter, Stalin shifted to the position of the "left" faction and turned against his former allies on the "right." He repeated this *volte-face* when he concluded a nonaggression pact with Hitler, following a relentless campaign against all kinds of fascism, even branding as such social democracy itself. As the Commissar for the nationalities, Stalin defended the right of Soviet peoples to cultivate their national languages, a position he later reversed when he proceeded to Russify the Soviet Union, his justification being the Diamat principle according to which what is valid today may be invalid tomorrow due to circumstantial changes. Hoxha's *principialnost* was a Stalin blueprint. Under Hoxha's leadership during the "national liberation war," the Albanian Communist Party concluded an alliance with the nationalistic Balli Kombëtar (National Front) to resist and fight Italian fascism. Pressed by his Yugoslav mentors, Hoxha quickly denounced the alliance while blaming it on his delegates. When the Yugoslavs found Xoxe more amenable to their plan of annexing Albania, Hoxha praised Tito in an article[9] to gain Tito's confidence. At the time, this amounted to his consenting to the annexation plan. And when

8. See Arshi Pipa, review of Hoxha's *The Titoites* (1962) in *Telos* 61 (Fall 1984, pp. 197-206; "Ueber die Zunkunft des albanischen Sozialismus," *Gegenstimmen*, Fall 1985, pp. 10-15; review of Ion Halliday's *The Artful Albanian, The Memoirs of Enver Hoxha* (1986) in *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, March-June 1987, pp. 40-42, and *Dielli*, March 31, 1987.

9. "The Yugoslavs needed my article to have it as a 'certificate of good behaviour' for Yugoslavia and Tito," Enver Hoxha, *The Titoites* (IMLS: Tirana, 1982), p. 449.

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Stalin denounced Tito, Hoxha promptly accused his ally of being a traitor to international communism while having Xoxe hanged as a traitor to the Albanian nation. Hoxha played the same game with Khrushchev. When the Soviet leader requested that Hoxha make peace with Tito, Hoxha went over to Mao instead, branding Khrushchev as a "social-imperialist." He extended that epithet to Mao when China came to terms with the United States.

There was a time when this horse trader of Marxism was applauded as the champion of "pure" Marxism-Leninism by ill-informed foreign acolytes, thus prompting Hoxha's Albanian devotees to hail him as the Messiah of world communism. Purism in politics is much more suspect than purism in language and poetry, "pure art" being no more than a religion of art, with beauty substituting for god. Stressing purity in politics is a disingenous way to hide its impurity. Now "purity" has been a preferred label for the Albanian brand of Marxism-Leninism, which is nominally Marxist, minimally Leninist, and essentially Stalinist, with a smattering of Maoism. The adequate name for this new religion is Stalalbanianism, or simply Hoxhanism. It reached its apex with the apotheosis of its founder, following his death. Scholars vied with each other to glorify the hero as a great statesman, a military genius, an eminent Marxist and philosopher, an outstanding historian, and even a distinguished writer, attributing such epithets as "universal," "immortal" and "eternal" to his mind or work.[10] Stalin's cult as the architect of the first socialist state in the history of humankind and the builder of the Soviet Union into a superpower is in the tradition of Russian messianism and the myth of the Third Rome. Hitler's charisma was grounded on the national feeling of revenge compounded with the myth of racial purity traced down to pagan times. Hoxha exploited the rising Albanian nationalism against the traditional religious and regional differences of his people, a strategy formulated by an Albanian *Risorgimento* man, Pashko Vasa: "The Albanians' religion is Albaniandom."

This mixture of patriotism and religiosity was in his blood, his family belonging to the Bektashi sect, a Shia Sufi heretical sect particularly influential in Albania on account of its patriotic activity. *Reflections on the Middle East*[11] includes a sort of essay on the Arab civilization, in which one runs into sentences revealing Hoxha's Islamic *parti pris*: "In fact the Koran is more complete and purer than the Bible (Torah) of the Jews, the Christian Gospel, etc." (464). He greatly admires Mohammed, "While being a preacher of the Koranic law, Mohammed, at the same time, was also 'head of the state' "(483). "Mohammed was not an 'autocrat' . . . because (*sic*!) God was the only 'source of authority both for the leader (Mohammed) and for the people' " (484). Sentences such as these strongly suggest

10. "Figure universelle" in Ramiz Alia, "Drapeau de la lutte pour la liberté et le socialisme," *Studia albanica* 23 (1986) 1, p. 7; "oeuvre immortelle" in Foto Çami, "Le camarade Enver Hoxha, fondateur, organisateur et dirigeant de notre glorieux Parti," *ibid.*, 22 (1985) 1, p. 8; "gloire eternelle à l'oeuvre monumentale" in Alia, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

11. (IMLS, Tirana, 1984).

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that Hoxha tends to identify with Mohammed, a projection of his own image as the founder of a new credo, Albanian atheism. Another passage praises Islam for its "democracy": "Its democratic character was reinforced, also by the liberation of people from the tyranny of different religions . . . " (486). Here Hoxha has in mind polytheistic religions as contrasted with monotheistic ones. But can a monotheistic religion be called democratic because it liberates peoples from polytheistic religions? This sounds like monopoly capitalism liberating the world from English and French colonialism. Can a person who utters such an enormity be a follower of Marx, for whom religion, any religion, is "opiate to the people"? Elsewhere one finds, "Mohammedanism, or Islam, is a 'universal' monotheistic religion" (463), ". . . its monotheism expressed in the axiom, 'There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet' " (464). Leaving out Allah, and paraphrasing, one gets: Hoxhanism, or Stalalbanianism, is a universal mono(a)theistic religion . . . . its mono(a)theism expressed in the axiom, "There is no god, but Hoxha is his prophet." Here the parallel with the Georgian seminarist lies in their *fanatic* pursuit of absolute power. They would not relent before reaching it, using to that end new and old Machiavellian means: lies, slander, hypocrisy, perjury, treachery, generalized espionage, falsification of history, corruption of science, not to mention jails, psychiatric confinement, gulags, torture of all kinds, and especially murder, be that the shooting of a pregnant woman once a Politburo member, or the systematic extermination of millions of people, including old Party members and even Party founders.

Khrushchev dealt the first blow to Stalin's cult, while going only half-way in his de-Stalinization reform (it was Khrushchev who suppressed the Polish protest in 1956 and then crushed the Hungarian revolution of the same year). Gorbachev seems committed to do away with both Stalin and the Stalinist plague. How will *glasnost* affect Albania, where Stalin has survived, and Stalinism in its Hoxhan variant is very much alive? Some signs of a change seem promising. Albania has established diplomatic relations with West Germany and Canada, and — most telling — with Hungary, a Soviet bloc country. The volume of tourism has increased. And for the first time since Albania broke with Yugoslavia, non-Party people have been allowed to visit their Yugoslav relatives. Facts such as these imply a partial rejection of Hoxha's isolationistic politics. If the trend consolidates, Albania might soon follow the example of other East European communist countries as to foreign policy. What about internal policies? In his recent talks with Albanian leaders in Tirana, Hans Dietrich Genscher, the West German Foreign Minister, raised the questions of human rights,[12] thus alluding to the fact Albania is the only European country that has not signed the Helsinki Pact. Now that Hoxha is gone, there is no reason for Albania to persist in being Europe's black sheep. Normal participation in international associations and conferences (one thinks especially of Third World and Balkan conferences) will erode the Hoxha cult, already injured by the sensational

12. Reuter Agency, Bonn, October 23, 1987.

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revelation of his homosexuality,[13] a crime punishable with no less than ten years according to the Albanian Penal Code. Once the Hoxha myth is debunked, the Hoxha cult will go down the drain. Radical writers will see to it. Ismail Kadare's narrative before his capitulation,[14] is a precedent which can serve as an example. In *Chronicle in Stone*, a bitter satire of the customs of Gjirokastër, Hoxha's native town, with him as a minor character, perverse sexuality and murder go hand in hand.

The question is who will be the one to start the debunking campaign. The actual number one, a most faithful disciple of the master, seems hardly fit for the job. The same can be said for the rest of the leadership. An initiative from the rank and file is to be excluded *a priori*, Stalinist unions having no more autonomy than fascist corporations. The students, perhaps? One thinks of the recent tumultuous demonstrations in China and South Korea, Albania being, according to some, more affinal to Third World than to European countries. One also remembers that the Albanian Cultural Revolution launched by Hoxha emulating Mao relied only in part on students, whose enthusiasm Hoxha distrusted.

My guess is that a student protest movement in Albania (not to be ruled out considering that a precedent exists: the 1981 mass demonstrations by the Albanians in Yugoslavia requesting republic status for Kosova) could hardly take place without being instigated, or at least condoned, by those in power. The latter alternative seems more probable, in view of the long period of totalitarian regime in the country. In other words, Albania would follow the example of the actual Chinese leadership which, having shelved Maos's legacy, has allowed a modicum of liberal reforms in the nation's economy, administration and foreign policy. If so, the actual Albanian leadership could manage to operate the shift in an anodyne manner. Hoxha's name would still be mentioned for rhetoric's sake, while sounding more and more hollow. And one hopes a day will come when the new generation will feel embarrassed and even ashamed of having had parents who could revere a person such as Hoxha. And where his body lies, a nameless slab will read: *Sic transit gloria immundi*.

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13. "Il mortale vizietto di Hozha," *Il Corriere della Sera*, 11 Nov. 1987; " 'Hoxha? Un pederasta che uccideva i propri amanti'," *La Republica*, 11 Nov. 1987: "Rivelazioni: 'Enver Hoxha era omosessuale, paranoico e assassino'," *Il Messaggero di Roma*, 11 Nov. 1987; "Cosi Hoxha vietò romanzi e musica," 14 Nov. 1987: "Albania rivela, 'Hoxha era gay e assassinava i suoi amanti'," *Il Resto del Carlino*, 11 Nov. 1987; "Hoxha, il 'deviazionista'," 13 Nov. 1987.

14. See Arshi Pipa, "Subversion vs. Conformism: The Kadare Phenomenon," in *Telos* 73 (Fall 1987), pp. 47-78.

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The Gospel According to Jameson

Brom Anderson

Since *Sartre: The Origins of a Style,* Fredric Jameson has sought to use literary criticism to address the deepest questions of metaphysics and politics. His enterprise of using literary form as a way of approaching metaphysical questions becomes explicit in *Marxism and Form*, whose very title suggests the encompassing claims that he is making for his project. Jameson seeks to defend Marxist thought against the accusation and the danger of reductionism by showing that Marxism must come to terms with literary form and, in fact, that only Marxism can. Central to the work is the ethical and aesthetic problem posed by the authors studied: the problem of form itself — "form" in a qualitative sense — in modern art and literature and in modern life generally. Jameson is concerned with the collapse of form in the work of art and in the human personality, a problem confronted in different ways by Adorno, Marcuse, Lukács and Benjamin. The movement toward the collective future led to the erosion of modernist resistance to the bourgeois world. Jameson's concern with the impulses and downfall of modernism found its fullest expression in his book on Wyndham Lewis, and to a lesser degree in his reflections in *New Left Review* (1984) on "postmodernism," a phenomenon which seems to inspire him with a mixture of enthusiasm and nausea. He both fears and celebrates the disappearance of form. His attempt to find in it a redemptive significance is part of his attempt to find spiritual meaning in our present condition. In *Fables of Aggression* and *The Political Unconscious* his analysis is sometimes marred by the fact that he is moving from the concrete to the abstract, using authors as occasions for his own theory-building and, in the process, losing some of the irony about the construction of theory itself, which arose from his combination of sympathy for and distance from the authors considered in *Marxism and Form*. Jameson is better at standing back from Adorno than at standing back from himself; self-irony is not his strongest suit.

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Perhaps the two most important thinkers for Jameson's own system of thought in *Marxism and Form* are Lukács and Bloch. Lukács furnishes Jameson with the notion of reification: that bourgeois society is characterized by a frozen, alienated experience in which the self is isolated from the world and social facts from their causes. The proletariat alone realizes, through its daily experience of labor, that this view of things is a static abstraction: what is real is the labor process, which unifies men, machines, and things in a common dynamic. The political hope that Lukács invested in his notion of the "class-consciousness" of the proletariat — the proletariat's privileged grasp of production and historical praxis — is open to the charge he himself later made against this hope: "idealism." The living unity of production grasped by the proletariat looks oddly metaphysical and religious, i.e., oddly similar to the living unity the early Christians located in the Holy Spirit. "Reification'" seems to echo the Christian view of the Pharisees — that they were in bondage to the flesh and the "letter," and blind to the spirit; that their pride made them think they could attain salvation by means of their righteousness as separate individuals, and that they therefore resisted the community of grace or faith. The fleshliness of the Pharisee was connected with his ethical individualism — his belief in the distinction between persons, and their ethical independence and responsibility, his belief in the Law, which teaches that the fundamental ethical reality is that of individual sin and righteousness.

Jameson is profoundly hostile to ethics (see especially *Fables of Aggresion*) because of its separation of the conscious self from the other, and its related separation of reason from instinct, conscious will from desire, and so on. In Christian language, these separations are just so many signs of the Fall, obstacles to our return to Eden. Marxism is for Jameson ultimately organized not simply around Lukács' notion of reification but around the related notions, which he often explicitly invokes, of the Fall. The "reified world" of late capitalism is a "fallen world," our reality is a "fallen reality," the very operation of efficient causality in human affairs is, Jameson asserts in discussing Althusser, a historical effect of our fallen state. The very oppositions between subject and object, mind and things, duty and desire, are the results of such reification, rather than primary features of reality itself. This reification is a historical process with distinctive concrete phases linked to human activity and changing modes of production. According to his stated intention, Jameson does not want to treat all distinctions as meaningless contingencies, or the truth as a unity like Schelling's Absolute, the "night in which all cows are black" (to borrow Hegel's phrase); he nevertheless speaks in precisely this way, as if the story of reality were a simple tale in which capitalism brought evil and division into the "henceforth fallen" world, invokes Marx to the effect that all human history has been nothing but prehistory, and contrasts all reality with "as yet unimaginable forms of collective consciousness." He thereby reduces all past or present reality to a meaningless shadow of this hoped-for apocalypse.

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Such a scheme of explanation can be rich and productive as long as it is confronted with an element of undigested "difference" or opposition, which would give it something to analyze and combat. As soon as this disappears, the holder of such a conception is faced with the danger Wittgenstein speaks of: "Some philosophers (or whatever you like to call them) suffer from what may be called 'loss of problems.' Everything seems quite simple to them, no deep problems seem to exist any more, the world becomes broad and flat and loses all depth and what they write becomes immeasurably shallow and trivial. Russell and H.G. Wells are examples of this."

To the criticism that Lukács' and Jameson's schemes are implicitly religious and hence "idealist." Jameson has an implied answer in the teachings of Ernst Bloch. As a Marxist who was also a sort of philosophical theologian, Bloch used the analogies between Marxism and Christianity not in order to criticize Marxism as religious, but to revaluate Christianity as proto-Marxist: as a vehicle for the hopes and energies of mankind and a vessel for those deep human wishes which Bloch calls "utopian." This term is for Bloch not one of disparagement, as in the earlier Marxist tradition, but of celebration. There is, he holds, a utopian content to all religion and ideology, i. e., a wish for the heart's desire not limited by the assumptions and restraints of our present-day reality. This content is essential to the guidance and energy of the revolutionary project. Bloch thus supplies Jameson with the principle of a Marxist hermeneutics analogous, as Jameson himself says, to that Christian hermeneutics which the monks of the Middle Ages applied to pagan literature. As they interpreted the tales and characters of pagan literature as prefigurations of Christian truth and Christian hope, so Jameson, with Bloch's assistance, interprets the literature of the past as a vehicle for the energies of humanity and as signs and wonders of that religion whose prophet was Marx. Thus Jameson will argue that even Wyndham Lewis, apparently one of the modernist authors most systematically opposed to Marxism, is despite himself a witness to Marxist truths and a bearer of the Marxist promise.

In *The Prisonhouse of Language* (1972), Jameson attempts to settle accounts with the French structuralism and post-structuralism of the 1950s and 1960s. The book is still of interest for Jameson's critique of the intellectual fashions that have since taken over much of the American academic world. But its role in Jameson's own project is mostly tactical and defensive: he is seeking to show that he can take advantage of the critical lessons of structuralism and post-structuralism, while at the same time rejecting or qualifying their assaults on narrative continuity in history, on the dialectic, and on the notion of a subject of history. At times Jameson mutes his criticisms, as if afraid to seem less nominalist than the authors he is criticizing (especially Althusser) and therefore naively "humanist"; moreover, he is joined to the authors he discusses by a common descent from the Surrealist movement of the 1930s. But on the whole his view is that the structuralists and post-structuralists are guilty of an

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unsatisfactory reductionism in which literature is deprived of its apparent subjects, only to have them replaced by a single, monotonous referent — language. By Jameson's own critical principles, this book is not sufficiently Marxist. In criticizing those who, to a considerable degree, are theoretical and political comrades, Jameson fails to reflect on the material and historical sources of their errors and to relate those errors to the social position of those who make them.

Jameson spent the following decade working on *The Political Unconscious*, his most recent book. In the process, he produced *Fables of Aggression*, which at first was part of the larger book but published separately because of its length. Along with the Sartre book, *Fables of Aggression* is Jameson's longest study of a single author, and in many respects his most interesting work. The Lewis book shares the more fully developed theoretical framework of *The Political Unconscious*, i.e., that the unconscious is profoundly political — the source of political energies, and penetrated by the political order. The study of politics requires consideration of the structure and movement of the psyche, which is the source and, to some extent, the mirror of political organization and change. The study of the psyche likewise requires that reflection on the character and movement of the political order. The privileged means of studying both together is the study of narrative, in which the author negotiates the relations between desire and ordering codes played out in the stories of individual lives and in the social whole.

The Lewis book plays out these relations between psyche, narrative stance and political order in a particularly ambitious way. Jameson attempts to come to grips not merely with Lewis himself, but with the problems modernism poses for Marxism, i.e., the questionable politics of many great modernists (fascism) and the fact of reification. It is Jameson's version of the problem of evil or the Fall. Lewis offers a lively occasion for considering these problems, precisely because he seems so vigorously to oppose Jameson's own principles, particularly his Marxism and his attachment to a collective future. Lewis (very vigorously and very self-consciously) seems to *like* that distance between self and object, ego and the desires, the identity of the self and the flow of history, which for Jameson can only be understood as alienation or "reification." Lewis supplies the element of undigested difference which Jameson's scheme needs if it is to avoid collapsing in on itself. In other words, Jameson needs an "other" like Lewis to struggle with; he needs struggle itself, but at the same time he has no satisfactory way of giving an account of this need.

There is much about Lewis himself, and about Lewis' criticism of the Left (as well as of the revolutionary Right) that Jameson does not understand; above all, Lewis' irony and the high value he places on tension. This irony is bound up with the high value Lewis puts on the self, with an ethics and aesthetics of self-discipline and self-consciousness in the tradition of Plato, the Stoics, and Montaigne. Lewis also places a high value on other things — on judgments of taste, on friendship, on romantic love — which are possible only to the separate self, the self which grows out of a tension with this world; and these too are

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things for which Jameson has little use or understanding, as his discussion of Lewis' books reveals. Jameson wishes to use his investigation of Lewis to make sense of one of the great paradoxes of modern "advanced" literary criticism since the 1930s: the fact that the "revolutionary" aesthetic of the authors we call "modernist" was usually coupled with a hostility to the Left. Jameson argues that Lewis' apparent opposition to the politics of the Left conceals a deeper affinity with that politics.

Jameson also uses Lewis in trying to explain fascism, i.e., how people, including workers, can have deliberately rejected communism or "the good" for something else; and how this something else succeeded in claiming to be a truer version of revolutionary socialism. The rejection of the good is usually explained by reference to the manipulations of the bourgeoisie, which disguised capitalist reaction in the language of socialism and revolution, but such an explanation fails to acknowledge the fact that fascism and Nazism could only function, even as ideological tricks, if someone were drawn to them enough to be deluded by them. Marxism can only understand aggression as the result or instrument of the pursuit of property; it cannot accord aggression any reality in itself, as a fundamental fact of human nature. What is real is human need and the human desire to own (which Marxism also cannot quite explain, once the ownership is more than enough to satisfy need). Honor, glory, authority, virtue, the cultivation of the will as its own aim, order, etc., are all illusory or ideological epiphenomena of the processes of production and appropriation, and lack any proper being of their own. The Marxist difficulties in the face of fascism are accordingly connected with the Marxist difficulties in the face of ethics, at least of an ethics of duty and responsibility. Marxism cannot accord such ethics any intrinsic meaningfulness, for to do so would be to understand man in terms other than those of labor and need, community and alienation. The Marxist difficulty in understanding ethics and will, in turn, is bound up with another Marxist difficulty, that of understanding how anyone could deliberately reject the good, or how evil can be possible. In the end Marxism must seek to show that evil, like the will, is an illusion, and that no one knowingly rejects the Marxist truth.

Jameson's aim in the Lewis book is to solve all these difficulties in one blow, to show that literary modernism was not *really* opposed to communism, that fascism itself was not really opposed to communism but only a disguised and distorted form of it, that aggression and even ethics itself are unreal and illusory. He seeks to achieve this by means of an analogy between Lewis' early narrative procedures, the Freudian theory of the ego, and the system of nation-states before 1914, and also an analogy between Lewis' later narrative procedures, the later Freudian instinct theory, and the bipolar and transnational opposition between communism and fascism. Lewis' early narrative techniques, organized around the strong but impassive self, according to Jameson, correspond to Freud's early division of the self into ego and id. His early protagonist, Tarr, and

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his antagonist dissolve in the trilogy, *The Human Age*, into suprapersonal ideological forces. This dissolution of the individual self reveals the illusory character of that self; it parallels the dissolution of the individual self into a field of opposing transindividual forces in the theory of Eros and Thanatos. The two terms can be compared to communism (for Jameson, the equivalent of Eros) and fascism. The opposition can in turn be broken down by pointing out that both Eros and Thanatos aim at instinctual release, both aim at the resolution of tensions and the dissolution of the individual self. Communism aims at the dissolution of tensions; the fascist love of death is just a form of the communist pursuit of utopia.

This simple theodicy has its peculiarities. One is that it cannot really account for the principles of opposition — ethics, aggression, the self — which it dissolves into what are supposed to be deeper unities in which all opposition is overcome. Another is that the melting together of love and death is perhaps not altogether in the interests of love. Does a good Marxist want to say that his communism and love of humanity is not essentially different from fascism and the love of death? In suggesting this possibility, Jameson is, I think, suggesting a deep truth about the attractions for many of communism and the party but this characterization of the Eros of communism is grounds for caution rather than celebration.

The great vice of Jameson's metaphysics is its abstractness, its ultimate abolition of all tensions, in particular of all the features of human life that depend on such tensions: will, ethics, the individual self, individual judgment, and a sense of the incongruous. This abolition of tensions means that Jameson's own thought is characterized by a profound lack of irony, precisely because it is characterized by a lack of sympathy for or understanding of the value of separateness, of the autonomous self and its virtues. Irony depends on the separation of the self from its surroundings, and even from itself. The abolition of these things has an unfortunate effect on Jameson's politics, or rather, it means that Jameson's thought (and perhaps this is implicitly true of any consequential Marxism, but particularly of the more philosophical versions) is profoundly apolitical. It ignores and excuses terror because it seeks through terror an end to politics. But, more generally, it doesn't even see political fact. Thus Jameson seems (at any rate, still in 1984) to confuse the Chinese Cultural Revolution with a revolt against consumerism. The abstractness of his politics relieves him of a sense of responsibility for precision in politics, and of the knowledge that he *has* a *particular* politics, as distinct from a mere partisanship with the Marxist good. He does not see the necessity of any specifically ethical element in politics, any choice of a position for which one bears a responsibility to do with the consequences, any more than of ethics in general.

Despite Jameson's attack on ethics, his metaphysics is associated with a sort of ethics, as is the early Christian attack on the Jewish ethics of responsibility: it is the ethics of a collective consciousness, of an "as yet unimaginable collective

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future." This ethics is more absolute and unconditioned because it is not consciously a law, but the overthrow of law. But what does Jameson's metaphysics mean socially? To whom does Jameson's gospel speak and how does it speak to them? Where, in a historical and social as well as a psychic sense, does this teaching itself come from? One might start to answer these questions by saying that Jameson is an American *idealist*, that he is in the tradition of those who, like Emerson, Whitman, and Henry James Sr., try to free us of the spiritual chaos, aesthetic ugliness, and social contingency of our democratic and commercial republic by teaching the transcendence of the oppositions between selves and the transcendence of the self itself insofar as it is involved in that opposition. In short, Jameson is trying to address the spiritual problems of commercial democracy by transmuting the dissolving character of the democratic and commercial world into a suprapolitical doctrine which lifts us out of the prose and pettiness of commerce and bond issues, of highways and supermarkets, of little suburban love affairs and other merely personal attachments into a realm in which there is "no East and West," no "mine and thine."

There is a certain nobility about this project: it releases real feelings of sublimity in the middle of the commercial republic, offering a real promise of escape from the purposeless bustle of lawyers and hawkers; it produces a sense of ethical and aesthetic form from the very dissolution of form — a sense of form which perfectly expresses the ambivalence of the American middle classes toward the very existence of the world and the social order. It is natural for this project of transcendence to have a strong appeal for critics and teachers of literature. Their work is traditionally endowed in Anglo-Saxon culture (at least since Arnold, and Coleridge before him) with an ethical purpose: to provide a secular replacement for religious faith, and a non-doctrinal answer to the problems of ethical purpose and political community. In teaching literature, professors of literature taught moral taste, a relation to a tradition, a canon of spiritual worth and a set of historical and intellectual references. (The "Hundred Great Books" are only a somewhat rigid and uncertain expression of this general enterprise.) This task underwent an enormous inflation in America in the 1950s and 1960s — the era of "modernism" in the universities. It was followed by a collapse at the end of the 1960s, mirroring the collapse of the ethical role of teachers.

The literary apocalypticism of the modernists, which proclaimed the end of art and of the distinction between art and life, dissolved into the political apocalypticism of the late 1960s, along with the barriers between the university and the market, the culture of the educated and that of youth, television and the ghetto. The English professor had been the teacher of a tradition to young (businessmen-) gentlemen. To teachers who were themselves not gentlemen but professionals (though in losing the connection to a tradition of the beautiful they simultaneously lost their relation to a scholarly tradition; so if they were professionals, it was no longer clear what they were professionals at), the very idea of the college as a place for training gentlemen, and the very idea of a tradition

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came to seem unreal in the millenerian explosion. These non-gentlemen were teaching students who were (this may have been one reason for the disenchantment of the late 1960s) themselves no longer privileged to be even in a limited sense gentlemen, but had become simply money-makers. The teachers of literature no longer knew who they were. Their confusion about their own place in the scheme of things was at once the cause and the consequence of their inability to make sense of the notions of a tradition or a canon, or indeed of ethical and aesthetic judgment or objective interpretation. In other words, their own confusion about their social function led naturally to a Protagorean relativism and doctrine of flux, and to the various forms of epistemological nihilism current in literature departments in the 1970s and 1980s .

These doctrines themselves were a desperate attempt to interpret the world, and the professors' situation in it, in a way which retained some connection to the millenarian emotions of the 1960s, themselves in turn prepared by the apocalyptic tendency of literary modernism and the literary criticism associated with it (Coppola was right in *Apocalypse Now* to associate the American response to the Vietnam War with the reading of Conrad and Eliot). That migration of spirit from art to cultural politics in the late 1960s ought not to surprise us; for the modernism of the professoriate had itself been a substitute for the cultural-political apocalypticism of the Popular Front. But, of course, there is something unsatisfying about the insistence that everything is language, or that all literature is violence, or that women are a form of writing, or that most writing is directed against women, and so on. After all, these doctrines, with their pallid denunciations, are mere images or figures of speech; moreover, they correspond to a peculiarly thin and vulgar conception of the uses of literature and literary criticism: it is to teach us to unmask ideology in the newspapers and on television or (the "spiritual" complement of this prosaic task) to usher in "departments of mystery management," as Geoffrey Hartmann is reported to have said. Finally, this way of conceiving literature has no defense against dissolution into banality and triviality, and some professors of comparative literature have drawn the conclusion that their line of business is at the end of its useful life and should simply be dropped, perhaps to be replaced by the sociology of comic books.

Against this background, Jameson stands out sharply. On the one hand, he shares in some degree the sense of dissolution of his audience; but precisely this permits him to speak to that audience and be understood. Moreover, he gives this sense of dissolution a much fuller, more positive content. He gives professors some reason for reading literature and a way of doing it, though in some of his later work some of his readings seem more like exercises (often quite interesting ones) of his talents and general procedures, rather than something urgent on their own terms. In teaching them to apply his scheme of interpretation, Jameson is in fact offering his readers a place in the previously-mentioned authentic American spiritual tradition. The political terms on which he makes this offer have the specific advantage of offering (like Lentricchia's less ambitious

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work) a connection with that great movement of American millenarianism, the Popular Front; and in general with the spiritual tradition which the *Partisan Review* critics labelled "Stalinism." The term is often misunderstood — it is almost meant to be misunderstood — and should be clarified.

The point of calling 1930s fellow-travelers "Stalinists" — an expression which was originated by the admirers of Trotsky and the anti-Party Left — was to associate their bland and innocent goodwill with the violence and cynicism of Stalin, to which the fellow-travellers were blind, and to which, in the view of those who used the expression, they were guilty of being blind. But the term was also used to suggest something humorless and uninflecting about the "good will," the innocent apocalyptic demeanor of the Popular Front; and to suggest that these qualities were not merely obstacles to seeing the reality of Stalin's deeds, but that they made those fellow-travellers indifferent to the reality of Stalin's deeds, and perhaps even concealed a certain unconscious violence — a nihilistic love for the abstract rationalism of Stalin's politics and even of Stalin's terror.

To call an American fellow-traveller a "Stalinist" seems absurd and unfair because of the moral and spiritual aspirations of the fellow-travellers; but it was precisely these aspirations that led the *Partisan Review* critics to so characterize them. It was because they at least implicitly understood the profoundly moral and, in a real sense, deeply apolitical claims of the "movement" that its critics attacked it by using a term which insisted on the fellow-travellers' complicity with labor-camps, Zhdanov, and Red imperialism. Their unfairness was deliberate: it was a protest against the deeply American, deeply moral intention of those they criticized, precisely for the brutal denial of reality; the moral, political, and epistemological nihilism concealed under all that blandness and niceness. It was, in part, an attack on a certain aspect of *America*, and of American Protestantism, rather than on Stalin himself. That is why it shows a misunderstanding to defend the Popular Front against the attacks of anti-communists by saying that it was not partisan to or conscious of Stalin's policies at home or elsewhere in the world, but rather concerned with American problems. The *Partisan Review* critics' charge was precisely that the Popular Front and its spiritual embrace of the American fact was an enormous act of spiritual narcissism and irresponsibility, permitting people to think they were only seeking the good at home when by implication they backed Stalin's murder of millions abroad. This act of narcissism led them to confuse partnership with the greatest tyrant in history with a beautiful moral transaction, an awakening of the spirit within the great congregation of the American people. If communism is true Americanism, then the America of which that is true is, for all its blandness, a moral inferno.

How does this excursus bear on Jameson? He does not connect himself with the Popular Front or with the anti-anti-communism of the 1950s and 1960s; his politics consists of the automatic pieties of the contemporary American Left: gay liberation, women, the Third World, and so on. He is, in fact, not particularly *historically*-minded in his own political positions, nor indeed particularly *political*

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in any concrete sense. But that is precisely the point: Jameson's Marxism is in the tradition of that profoundly apolitical millenarianism which characterized the American Left of the 1930s and beyond. He is free of the sentimentalities of the folk song; he does not share the pious interest in the grass roots of American communism common among young historians today; nor indeed, does he express much interest in the history of the American Left in general. Jameson's own political references are to Sartre and Althusser, rather than to Earl Browder. Nevertheless, he is in the tradition of the American academic intellectual — of Matthiesson, Kenneth Burke to some degree, Malcolm Cowley — who, in an older, more mandarin day, connected the politics of the American educated middle-class with the spiritual tradition of Emerson and Henry James Sr. Jameson writes in the age of the young professional and not of the American middle-brow, the older American liberal-arts college, or the Book-of-the-Month-Club. The children of the post-Vietnam boom do not read, nor do even the teachers of literature among them read with much vital concern. If anyone can help keep alive the flame of the tradition — the American spiritual tradition, for all its vices, and the tradition of literature — in our middle-classes, it is perhaps someone like Jameson; someone who seeks to assume the task of the critic and the philosopher, the task of being an interpreter of life. If his guides and chapbooks to metaphysics and to the life of the spirit, to history and to the energies of Eros, seem a bit pale, for all their knottiness and ingenuity, to the detached reader — well, what right do we have to complain? The detached reader and his irony in the face of the American wasteland does not perhaps do much active good, and no doubt less than Jameson. Still, one may hope for something better. What one ultimately fears from Jameson is an evacuation of energy and meaning from things, despite the energy and intelligence with which he seeks to awaken literary study by confronting it with history and philosophy, and these latter by confronting them with literature. In the end, if we take him too seriously and literally, he will make things weigh a bit less, be a bit less real, through his ultimate denial of conflict and opposition.

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Baby M and the Politics of Gender

Jeanne Schuler

Despite repeated references to Biblical precedents — Hagar, Solomon, Mary — the Baby M script could have been written by Kafka. A contract for a most personal "service" was signed and the court ordered strict performance, couched in the language of freedom, rights and equality. The judge wrote in a universal vein, appealing to pro-life, pro-family, pro-choice slogans. Most lawyers polled said this was classical contract reasoning.[1] Therapists clearly backed the opinion of psychological fitness. Extensive media coverage had early declared a winner. The jargon of emancipation which sells cars and perfume was now marketing old concepts of women as new forms of motherhood.

The first problem with this debate on surrogacy concerned the use of terms. The sanitized language of technique fragmented the events described. This was not in the realm of persons but of body parts: "Procreative liberty," "egg harvests," "womb rental," "embryo discard," "non-coital reproduction," "risk pay for pregnancy services," "social infertility," "reproductive collaboration," "gestational hostess." Language was as depersonalized as the exchange which transforms childbearing into work. For those who did not buy this engineering approach, there were the honorable phrases of liberalism: "consenting," "informed," "gratifying," "non-coercive," "socially useful." How could one criticize a freely chosen private action that enhances our procreative rights? Only on the shaky grounds of paternalism, according to this line of reasoning. Liberalism had so shaped these debates that we lacked other terms for criticizing abuse. In this political climate, even slavery's abolition might be considered paternalistic if the case for consent were made.[2]

The Whitehead ruling was one of the victories needed to transform a marginal into a booming business.[3] On both grounds of contract and family law

1. Mark Rust, "Whose Baby Is It?" in *American Bar Association Journal* (June 1, 1987), p. 55.

2. Observed in a biting account by Katha Pollitt, *The Nation* (May 23, 1987).

3. Noel Keane, the "father" of surrogacy, discusses the need for legal guarantees in "Surrogate Motherhood," *Southern Illinois Law Journal* (1980), p. 155. The Supreme

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(best interests of the child), the surrogate arrangement was upheld by Judge Sorkow. From a custody standpoint, the Whitehead history could not compete with the Sterns: alcoholism, bankruptcy, foreclosure, unemployment, high school dropout, truck driver, Vietnam vet vs. pediatrician, professor, son of Holocaust survivors. In a somewhat comic vein, the judge denied that class considerations played any part in his judgment.

For her part, Mary Beth Whitehead had frittered away the court's traditional concern for the birth mother with her exasperating behavior. In the judicial mind the threats, lies, and flight seemed symptoms of instability, not despair. Psychologists could not warm to a family which ignored expert help for alcohol, marriage, and child adjustment problems. The biological father won on all counts, except the contract's clause forbidding abortion. A surrogate may destroy the child, but she has no claim to it after birth. The ruling exuded a misogynous feel similar to the film *Kramer v. Kramer*. The court sympathized strongly with the man's desire for genetic offspring, while the woman's frantic struggle to retain custody appeared pathological. Women are held primarily responsible for the baby shortage. "One of the most ironic reasons for the adoptable child shortage is women's successful effort to have free choice to prevent conception."[4] Birth control, career, casual sex, unwed mothers, and abortion were women's doing. Since women had generated the problem, it was only fitting that they provide solutions.

Surrogacy may be the future cottage industry of the poor or the pin money of the middle class. According to a psychological study of 50 surrogate applicants, many were unemployed and only one had a college degree. They listed as their desires: money, pregnancy, altruism, and the re-experience of separation from a child.[5] Justice was counting on the oldest female motives: compassion and financial need. These motives must mesh since, without the shield of altruism, it is difficult to justify the standard surrogate fees ($5.000-10,000). Even at minimum wages, a year of one's life, and a severed relation are worth more.

Maximizing an individual's reproductive options was a dominant interest of this court. A procreative right was emerging, based on the right to privacy. The reasoning was convoluted: if we could prevent conception by using birth control, we could demand offspring through a variety of means.[6] Furthermore, "if one has the right to procreate coitally, then one has the right to reproduce noncoitally. If it is the reproduction that is protected, then the means of reproduction are also to be protected."[7] The woman — like the petri dish and

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Court of Kentucky recently found that surrogate contracts are legal if they allow the mother a 30 day period after birth to finalize her decision.

4. J.S.C. Sorkow, *The Family Law Reporter* (April 7, 1987), p. 2001.

5. Philip Parker, "Motivation of Surrogate Mothers," in *American Journal of Psychiatry* (Jan. 1983), p. 117.

6. Cf. John Robertson's fallacious turn in "Embryos, Families and Procreative Liberty: The Legal Structure of New Reproduction," in *Southern California Law Review* (1986), p. 1026. 7. Sorkow, *The Family LawReporter*, *op. cit.*, p. 2022.

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sperm bank — became another "means" to enable the goal of genetic offspring; in this case, for the male parent.

The court also sought a remedy for the shortage of babies available to childless couples. A rise in childlessness has coincided with a drop in the numbers of "desirable" newborns available for adoption. The infertility crisis (1 in 7 married couples) has sparked the growth of various infertility treatments. Most lawyers writing on the issue see the law's task as protecting the child's interests without stalling the development of these new technologies. Among the more exotic: artificial insemination with either spouse or donor semen (estimated from 6,000 to 20,000 children born annually by means of AID); in vitro fertilization and subsequent transplant (over 1000 babies conceived by IVF worldwide since 1978); embryo transfers from womb to womb. The surrogate arrangement is seen as technically the simplest and legally the thorniest: simply AID, with a legally unprecedented promise to relinquish all claims to the child at birth.

The law must strain to depict surrogacy as responsive to women's interests. Some see surrogacy as a way for women to compete with men without the pregnancy "handicap." If a delayed pregnancy results in infertility, reproduction can still occur. "A technology that alters the site of conception and allows female genetic and gestational parentage to be separated is potentially significant for women. This technology should expand freedom by increasing the range of reproductive choices and may contribute to new reproductive and social roles for women."[8]

Tomorrow social infertility may be considered a motive equal to biological infertility today. Why put a career on hold, with someone else willing to bear my child for a fee? The idea — only too predictably — parodies Shulamith Firestone's strange fantasy, with only *some* women freed from childbirth while others pursue it as wage labor.[9] There is no reason to reject this outcome as improbable; if surrogacy gets interpreted as a right, it will assume every form imaginable by a market culture.

Looking at surrogacy from the adopting mother's standpoint, one author sees the arrangement as a way women can be compensated by society for infertility problems that often lie beyond their control. Society *owes* the couple a child of partial genetic likeness in compensation for the damage inflicted by the pill, Dalkon shields, delayed pregnancies, environmental pollution, etc.[10]

For years, writers in law journals have proposed surrogate policy as one end to discrimination between the sexes. In their view, the surrogate mother is the biological equivalent to the sperm donor. Until women can donate wombs, eggs, and embryos just as men hand over sperm, equality has not been achieved

8. Robertson, "Embryos, Families and Procreative Liberty," *op. cit.*, p. 1026.

9. Firestone now repudiates her earlier identification of female emancipation with mechanical reproduction in *The Dialectic of Sex*.

10. Hollinger, "From Coitus to Commerce: Legal and Social Consequences of Non-coital Reproduction," in *Journal of Law Reform* (1985), p. 876

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achieved. Until women can receive money for planned pregnancy without facing the babyselling charge, they do not have the freedom of men. To achieve this "equality," the woman's experience of childbirth is made comparable to the man's. "The surrogate father sperm donor is legally recognized in all states. The surrogate mother is not. If a man may offer the means for procreation then a woman must equally be allowed to do so. To rule otherwise denies equal protection of the law to the childless couple, the surrogate whether male or female and the unborn child."[11]

The proposed distinction between three levels of motherhood — genetic, gestational, psychological — serves to rationalize the new technologies by subordinating nature to nurture.[12] So origins, whether sperm bank, petri dish, frozen embryo or uterine hostess do not really matter. What really matters is how you are raised. To facilitate the marketing of the family, a significant experience is expropriated from women under the guise of shifting terminology.

This argument is specious. Surrogacy contracts involve an effort to redefine family by undercutting the biological mother's relation to the child. In connection with birth, all things are not equal and cannot be made so through the signing of contracts. The language of consent and coercion cannot dictate the meaning of experience. How does one freely surrender a child who does not exist? To promise a year in advance to end a relation which has not begun is not an informed choice. Contrary to Judge Sorkow, one cannot know in advance "just what one is doing" when it involves the loss of a child.

The judge was ambivalent. He veered between seeing surrogacy as an unprecedented, bizarre measure to just another contract. The contract model won out. Presumably, if we could predetermine the ownership of a house and a car, we could decide the fate of future offspring. "Counsel says that until she felt the emotion of birth and sensed the child, she could not give informed consent at the time she signed the contract. Would he have all contracts in limbo until the result of the intended agreement is available and the makers could then conclude whether the result is what was intended and the contract then made enforceable? How would one handle the marriage contract, the property settlement agreement?"[13]

Pregnancy initiates an intense bond that must be broken painfully to enforce the contract. One need not appeal to the discredited Tender Years' doctrine to make this claim. The property model supports this conclusion. The woman has invested considerably more in the child at birth. She is not merely another party to the contract. The baby born to a surrogate should no more have its fate sealed in advance than the baby put up for adaption. After birth, decisions

11. Sorkow, *The Family Law Reporter, op. cit.*, p. 2023.

12. The influence of the psychological parenting theory is discussed by Chin-Chin Ho and Mark Moreau, "Child Custody Awards to Non-Parents," in *Loyola Law Review* (New Orleans: 1987), p. 51.

13. Sorkow, *The Family Law Reporter*, *op. cit.*, p. 2012.

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about custody, adoption and visitation can be formalized.

Regardless of the origins of sperm, egg, or embryo, the woman who carries the child should be considered the mother — without modification. Mothering — the experience of intense interdependence and care — does not begin at birth and is not reducible to the anatomy of egg, uterus, or labor. George Annas of the Hastings Center puts it well: "The woman who gestates a child should be considered the child's legal mother for all purposes. This is not based on antiscientific, anachronistic, or sentimental views of motherhood. Rather it is a recognition of the gestational mother's greater biological contribution to the child, including risks, and physical contributions of the nine months of pregnancy, and the need to protect the newborn by always providing it with at least one immediately identifiable parent."[14]

After the Whitehead ruling, state legislatures were buzzing with proposed surrogacy regulations.[15] To discourage this budding practice, the British plan should be adopted.[16] As with prostitution, the practice is left private. No public accomodations, contracts, third party payments or advertising are allowable. Though persons informally could make promises, the contracts should be invalid as a matter of public policy. If selling kidneys or hearts is objectionable (and presently illegal), so much more the marketing of pregnancy "services."

It is feared that the prospect of custody battles may dampen the buyer's enthusiasm. Well, let him take this risk; the woman bears all the others. Law should not ease the marketing end at the expense of the "producers." To allow for these contracts as a way of protecting the child is a valid, but insufficient reason. As in a bitter divorce, the children — whether newborn or not — are bound to suffer.

Reproductive liberty sounds as if it was written for women, but it signals a new level of alienated sexuality. In the surrogacy case, biological equality was simplistically deduced: "you bring the sperm, I the egg, thus a baby is born." Behind the effort to make all things equal in the realm of reproduction figures a new form of discrimination. The hazards of reproductive freedom are not easily visible to liberal politics. This embattled warrior has championed many a good cause. However, liberalism nurtures freedom without cultivating a vision of family, let alone community. Thus it is easily drafted to the side of the *status quo*, once so-called negative liberties are intact. Liberalism is blind to the problems of the lifeworld. What happens to me is overwhelmingly up to me. If coercion must involve physical violence, if getting paid implies consent, if contracts embody freedom, then outwardly our social practices show few signs of exploitation.

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14. George Annas, "The Baby Broker Boom," in *The Hastings Center Report* (June 1986), p. 31.

15. Legislation is pending in 25 states on surrogacy. 29 states have statutes on AID; IVF is unregulated.

16. Diana Brahams, "Hasty British Ban on Commerical Surrogacy," in *The Hastings Center Report* (Feb. 1987), p. 16.

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With surrogacy, capitalism and liberalism converge again. First comes the business, then the rulings giving the go-ahead to the business. Legislation and public debate are last to take up what has become a *fait accompli*, the infertility industry. Apart from the validity of the contract and the best interests of the child, the law only hesitates in relation to a recalcitrant public policy, i.e., one currently bothered by the symbolics of motherhood sullied by transactions. Like other archaic fears, this too is expected to pass.

Mackinnon anticipates the effect of a surrogacy ruling based upon purported sexual equality. A law which stipulates equal treatment usually applies the operative (male) standards under the guise of gender neutrality. "The sameness standard has mostly gotten men the benefit of those few things women have historically had — for all the good they did us. Almost every sex discrimination case that has been won at the Supreme Court level has been brought by a man. Under the rule of gender neutrality, the law of custody and divorce has been transformed, giving men an equal chance at custody of children and at alimony. Men often look like better *parents* under gender-neutral rules like the level of income and presence of nuclear family, because men make more money and initiate the building of family units."[17] This effectively describes the impact of reproductive liberties. In surrogacy, pregnancy seems to mimic the sperm's role; women "donate" egg, womb, time. In the name of equality, a remarkable experience is trivialized, thus making the contractual abandonment of all claims to the child plausible.

Feminists have been latecomers to family debates. When not consigned to whole earth or right-wing specialties, pregnancy and birth appear as residual injustices, the flowering of pain and humiliation, as in some of Judy Chicago's work. From inside the workworld, it is tempting to consign pregnancy to a 9 month interruption, an occasion for health risks, anxiety, weight gain, lousy employment benefits, and showdowns with medical martinets.

On the theoretical plane, emancipation has often signified the abolition of kinship and gender. Backed up by Marx, Freud, and Levi-Strauss, Gayle Rubin defines gender as domination centering on the organized exchange of women. Sandra Bem classifies as gender aschematic, children geared to a purely anatomical model of sex. Supposedly, a sex-blind person is more liable to challenge discrimination. Mackinnon and others argue for a personhood that transcends sexual polarity — a personhood of the future: "when a group's characteristics become constitutive of the fully human, rather than being defined as exceptions to or as distinct from the fully human. The moment when one's particular qualities become part of the standard by which humanity is measured is a millenial moment."[18] Gender is an artifact of unfreedom, and pregnancy hints too strongly of an indissoluble core of difference to play much of a positive role in

17. Catharine Mackinnon, *Feminism Unmodified* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 35.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

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feminist politics.

This dissolution of gender is in principle undesirable. The best of all worlds would include gender if it maintained some links with human embodiment and history. By encasing its vision in the old Enlightenment concepts — freedom, choice, equality, individuality, privacy, the fully human, the future — feminist theory has been a bit sponsor of the capitalist meltdown of substance. Engaging in the "metaphysics of gender" by deciding whether it is always or never a progressive force is politically unproductive and theoretically mystifying. A feminism unqualified by preexisting modifiers, including gender and history, lacks resources for change.[19] Political movements composed of "individuals" will not pose much threat to a consumer society awash in homogeneity.

In any case, talk about "the fully human" should be informed by the tactical questions of the present. Why not act pragmatically whenever the influence of gender is subversive (e.g., Mother's Day Peace Rallies)? Definitions of motherhood have political consequences; they are worth battling over. Central is the effort to reclaim for women pregnancy and birth. The medical establishment has long attempted to control it; now the market is making its bid. Indeed, interpreting pregnancy may help to shape a new political discourse, an heir to the social contract metaphor of liberalism.[20]

Gender functions critically in politics when biology is not segregated from social life as if matter lay outside of spirit. The consciousness of women is one strand of the struggle for new forms of life. A society in which differences do not imply discrimination is the best alternative to the limited form of justice which expects race, age, sex, etc. to become invisible in order not to serve oppression. Feminists have a stake in society's interpretation of pregnancy and motherhood. There seems to be a growing consensus that the interests of liberty, technology, and compassion find these fungible functions. Resisting surrogacy involves some odd alliances — the Pope — and some unraveling friendships — the liberal legal wing. But ultimately it is dignity, not sentimentality, which is lost in the commercialization of reproduction.

A Postscript

The unanimous New Jersey Supreme Court ruling (Feb. 3, 1988) is welcome. As the most comprehensive review to date, it may well influence future policy. In contrast to an earlier Kentucky Supreme Court decision (1986), surrogacy is here labeled "baby-selling — illegal and perhaps criminal." Because parental rights cannot be terminated prior to the child's birth, consent was "invalid," the contract "unenforceable," and the transaction infected with "the potential for devastation," e.g., battling over the child. Thus the trial court's judgment that

19. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

20. Jean Bethke Elshtain discusses Arendt's suggestion about natal imagery and political discourse in *Meditations on Modern Political Thought: Masculine Flesh/Feminine Themes for Luther to Arendt* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986), p. 110.

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surrogacy plows new legal ground within contract law was rejected. The court suggested that the *ex parte* order granting custody to the Sterns during the trial was probably erroneous and recommended that surrogate mothers be able to keep their children pending legal decisions, unless found unfit. That Whitehead's emotional unraveling was due in large part to this court order was noted with sympathy by the court. "We do not know of, and cannot conceive of, any other case where a perfectly fit mother was expected to surrender her newly born infant, perhaps forever, and was then told she was a bad mother because she did not. We know of no authority suggesting that the moral quality of her act in those circumstances should be judged by referring to a contract made before she became pregnant." The case was settled on the old grounds of custody with the child's best interest as decisive. Though the trial court's bias for the Yuppie features of the Stern's lifestyle was chided, custody was granted to those who had cared for the child over a year and a half.

The Hastings Center multinational survey on bioethics reveals a strong consensus against surrogacy (June, 1987). Of 15 statements, only Ontario, Holland, and the American Fertility Society supported surrogacy with payment. Without legislative action, the domestic surrogacy business (12 centers in the US) may be dying. Technological, rather than legal innovations, may continue as the favored form of infertility treatment.

Reading and Misreading Schmitt: An Exchange

To the Editors:

I must be doing something right. In *Telos* 71 your reviewer attacks *Reactionary Modernism* as a liberal rehash that fails to live up to Leftist insights. In *Telos* 72 the same work is again attacked for rehashing liberal conventional wisdom by an enthusiast of Carl Schmitt. Who would have thought that *Telos* would become a meeting place of Right and Left against the middle? The issue devoted to Carl Schmitt is a sad event in the history of *Telos*. It suggests that the deepest current in the journal that has done so much to help our generation think its way out of the Leftist attack on liberalism is rather distrust and rejection of liberalism.

Contrary to the claims of Joseph Bendersky, Carl Schmitt deserves recognition as an important contributor to the conservative revolution, if we define Weimar's conservative revolution as the intellectual vanguard that attacked the

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Weimar Republic and sought an authoritarian solution to its problems. My own interpretation in *Reactionary Modernism* does indeed share the assessments of George Mosse, Gordon Craig, Hans-Jürgen Puhle, Karl Dietrich Bracher, Martin Greiffenhagen, Christian Graf von Krockow, and Kurt Sontheimer. Neither I nor any of these other interpreters have called Schmitt a Nazi ideologue, a *völkisch* or anti-Semitic thinker. I did describe Schmitt as "the most widely read and respected political scientist of his day . . . ," one who argued that emergencies obviated the need for normative law. I noted that he joined the Nazi Party in 1933 because he saw in it the realization of his theory of decisionism. I examined those aspects of his work that touch on the theme of special concern to me, that is, how he reconciled illiberalism with enthusiasm for modern technology. His understanding of romanticism focused on the role of making decisions and taking actions regardless of the values on which those decisions rest. He was a critic of liberalism because it eroded the primacy of the deciding and decisive political actor in favor of parliamentary discussion, "ethical pathos and materialist-economic sobriety." He attacked Marxism as an extension of bourgeois and liberal materialism which denied the primacy of politics. Schmitt belongs in what I called the reactionary modernist tradition because he recast romanticism away from its anti-industrial overtones and towards a decisionist or existentialist stress on decision, and because he saw in technology an "activistic metaphysic" that was distinct from positivism.

Bendersky, in a statement of shocking naivete from the pen of a historian of modern European intellectual history, writes that "such (critical) descriptions (of Schmitt) surely leave the reader wondering why and how a figure with this alleged brutal, irrational preoccupation with action could ever become an internationally respected legal scholar"(29). Does Bendersky really mean to suggest that the history of this terrible century is a simple morality play of intelligence united to virtue, and stupidity allied with evil? The list of distinguished "internationally respected" academics and intellectuals who were drawn to fascism, and to National Socialism, is depressingly long (Paul de Man is only the latest to join the dishonor roll), not to mention the list of distinguished intellectuals drawn to communism. If only the undistinguished had succumbed to the totalitarian temptation, perhaps much less blood would have been shed! It should be obvious to students of modern intellectual history that intellectual distinction has nothing whatsoever to do with good political or moral judgment. Carl Schmitt, however, was a political theorist, so his bad political judgment at crucial moments cannot be separated from his theoretical work.

Wherever intellectuals come to despise liberal democratic institutions — in Weimar Germany, in the postwar Italy of left-wing terrorism, or apparently in the United States now — there Carl Schmitt and his illiberal message will find warm admirers. Wherever people conclude that, as Paul Hirst suggests, enemies have nothing to talk to one another about, and that parliamentarism and diplomacy are simply ruses for a struggle for power, there Schmitt will find supporters.

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Paul Piccone and G. L. Ulmen, in search of a "Leftist *Realpolitik*," argue that Schmitt asked questions that have been neglected by Leftists. This is certainly the case. I am no longer interested in developing a Leftist *Realpolitik* because I am no longer a Leftist. But if I were still on the Left, I would focus my attention on a host of authors with impeccably liberal, democratic and humane credentials. But their "no-nonsense" approach to the study of international politics has yet to enter the pages of *Telos*. To neglect them and to plunge into the swamp of the anti-democratic thought of the Weimar Republic is to fall victim to the ersatz realism of a Schmitt, one which assumes that it is *only* the illiberal Left and illiberal Right that is realistic, while the liberal center of democracies is populated by sentimentalists and utopians. This was nonsense when first articulated in the 1920s, and it is nonsense today.

Why, for example, has there been no special issue of *Telos* on Raymond Aron, who is the first 20th-century thinker to integrate sociological theory, liberal philosophy, and strategic realism? What of the British tradition of liberal *Realpolitik* evident in the work of Hedley Bull (an Australian who also taught in Britain), Michael Howard, and Martin Wight, not to mention the work of the greatest democratic statesman of the century, Winston Churchill. If one were looking for conservatives to learn from, why look to Schmitt before Churchill? If George Orwell in the 1930s and 1940s could appreciate Churchill, why can't the critical Left in the 1980s do the same? Why so little discussion of Stanley Hoffmann's efforts over the last thirty years to blend a liberal sensibility and realism? Rather than repeat Leftist platitudes about former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt the technocrat, why not actually read and think about Schmidt's speeches, essays and several books, which display an acute blend of Karl Popper, Kant, and Max Weber with a firm grasp of force and statecraft? In West Germany today, Hans-Peter Schwarz' recent essay, *Die gezähmten Deutschen* (*The Paralyzed Germans*), presents a trenchant critique of Leftist moralism in international politics and argues for a revival of realist thought on the basis of liberal principles. Henry Kissinger, from his first work on Metternich and Castlereagh to his efforts at détente, was always seeking to blend realism with some notion of legitimate international order. Michael Smith's recent study, *Realism from Weber to Kissinger*, though highly critical of Kissinger, seeks room for both moral concern and a grasp of the cold monsters of international politics.

Why not look at American practitioners of liberal values and *Realpolitik*? Alexander Hamilton and James Madison in the *Federalist Papers* made numerous arguments about the dilemmas of reconciling executive power and democratic institutions. Abraham Lincoln used those powers and expanded the powers of the American Presidency in the one great war of the 19th century to combine liberalism and nationalism. Yet who would think of doing something so quaint as reading and thinking about Abraham Lincoln? After all, he only saved the union and abolished slavery! And why, when seeking ways to combine moral purpose and *Realpolitik*, should those seeking a leftist *Realpolitik* turn to Carl

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Schmitt before thinking about Franklin D. Roosevelt, who overcame American isolationists to massively intervene to defeat Nazism; or Harry Truman, who contained Stalin, initiated the Marshall Plan and NATO, and recognized the state of Israel? Carl Schmitt, on the other hand, was a real "no-nonsense" intellectual, unlike all those flabby liberals. He had some real accomplishments to his credit. He helped destroy the Weimar Republic, and thereby helped bring Hitler to power!

For those of us who had our anti-intellectual fling in the late 1960s, this talk about realism and no-nonsense approaches to politics has a disturbingly familiar ring. Are we now to go in search of "tough Germans" like Carl Schmitt to counterbalance the Habermasian softies who talk too much about talking? The great falsehood of anti-liberal thought in the last century was that commitment to individual liberty, social equality, freedom of speech, and political democracy were somehow more utopian and less realistic than the authoritarian and totalitarian solutions of the Right and Left. Though he had something else in mind — actually much too often he had liberals in mind — C. Wright Mills' phrase, "crackpot realism" applies well to Schmitt's views no less than to Lukács' defense of Stalinism, while it is those who are often derided as sentimentalists, such as FDR, Churchill, or Lincoln, whose grasp of force and statecraft was most realistic.

The editors of *Telos* who have been around since its beginning know what political disasters result from attacks on liberalism. It is not inevitable that the deepest impulse of the ex-New Left generation be antipathy to liberalism. On the contrary, a significant portion of the contributions of *Telos* over the past 15 years suggest that a liberal turn is required. Others would argue that the strength of *Telos* lay in its uncompromising illiberalism. I think that is a partial reading at best. It is a disturbing betrayal of its earlier promise, that the editor and his current colleagues continue to resist the obvious implication of so much of the productive rethinking that has appeared in the pages of the journal, while repeating the now very stale clichés about the inadequacies of liberal democracies and liberal democratic theory.

Sincerely,
Jeffrey Herf

Dear Jeffrey Herf:

Your reaction to both Eley's and Bendersky's not altogether flattering evaluations of your book is certainly understandable. Unfortunately, however, this *coincidental* double-barreled criticism does not provide any evidence for your deduction that you must be doing something right (*coincidental* is emphasized since the two criticisms have nothing to do with any collectively-shared "official" *Telos* view *vis-à-vis* your book — in fact, other editors have privately expressed much more positive views, although they never got around to putting them down on

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paper). At any rate, your self-defense is far from convincing, your subsequent criticism of what you perceive to be the direction of the journal even less so.

Consider your retort to Bendersky. Instead of confronting his careful demonstration of the misstatements circulated about Schmitt by otherwise eminent scholars, all you do is trot out a half-baked argument from authority — one of the weakest forms of argument. So what if your mistakes have also been made by Mosse, Craig, Puhle, Bracher, Greiffenhagen, Krockow, and Sontheimer. Bendersky has convincingly shown that they were also off the mark. All you prove is not that you were originally right, but that, at best, you were in good company in being wrong.

Worse yet, you bother neither to consult the relevant texts in question nor to confront Bendersky's and Eley's objections. Instead, you continue relying on the mistaken conventional wisdom concerning Schmitt. You write: "Schmitt deserves recognition as an important contributor to the conservative revolution, *if we define Weimar's conservative revolution as the intellectual vanguard that attacked the Weimar Republic and sought an authoritarian solution to its problems* (italics added)." But precisely in terms of this definition, Schmitt was not a member of the conservative revolution because he was not part of the intellectual vanguard that attacked the Weimar Republic. Rather, he was one of those intellectuals who sought to save it. He argued that the Weimar Constitution, or for that matter any constitution, should not provide the means for its own destruction. Owing to just such a possibility in Art. 48, he sought an "authoritarian" solution to guard against its destruction by totalitarian movements such as Nazism and communism. Moreover, this solution was clearly meant to be temporary, since Schmitt had no thought of restoring the authoritarian state he knew was a thing of the past. He recognized that Germany had reached that stage of the democratic revolution already foreseen by Tocqueville. Like Weber, he understood a clear-cut distinction between liberalism and democracy, and that liberalism threatens democracy, as democracy threatens liberalism. Again like Weber, he was not a democrat by instinct or will, but he was aware of the irreversibility of the new political situation. Anyway, Schmitt certainly saw democracy as preferable to the alternatives on both the Left and the Right.

Your retort gets worse: without providing any pertinent textual evidence, you repeat the totally ungrounded claim that Schmitt "joined the Nazi Party in 1933 because he saw in it the realization of his theory of decisionism." But had Schmitt seen the Nazi Party in this light he would have joined it long before and not fought it so vehemently during the Weimar Republic. He joined it only after the Enabling Act, which he saw as the death of the Weimar Constitution and the creation of a new political situation. Reliable witnesses such as Ludwig M. Lachmann, who were in Schmitt's seminar from the middle of 1932 to March 1933, have reported that, predictably on the basis of what he had written, Schmitt did not welcome Hitler's assumption of power. Moreover, nowhere in his writings does Schmitt attempt to reconcile what you characterize as

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"illiberalism with enthusiasm for modern technology." Given the role you attribute to the conservative appropriation of technology in your definition of "reactionary modernism," that claim fits Ernst Jünger but not Schmitt. At any rate, Schmitt was certainly no romantic. His understanding of romanticism — political romanticism — is not "focused on the role of making decisions and taking actions regardless of the values on which those decisions rest." Schmitt attacked romanticism and its aestheticization of all spheres of culture. More generally, he faulted the European bourgeoisie as a class which embraced romanticism and thereby depoliticized the social order by transforming political debate into an endless conversation in which the pursuit of amusement and self-indulgence rendered genuine political decisions impossible. In Schmitt's view, romanticism can never reach a decision: "Political romanticism ends where political action begins." Far from being representative of what you call "reactionary modernism," Schmitt may instead be classified as one of the first genuinely post-modern thinkers. In his 1929 essay on what he calls "the age of neutralizations and depoliticizations," he makes clear that a process which has lasted for three centuries has "drawn to its close," that the movement in which the modern mind has attained its maximum effectiveness, liberalism, is characterized by this process, which is not the chance result of modern development but its original and essential goal: the striving for a neutral sphere free of all antagonistic relations.

Schmitt's critique of liberalism is not accompanied by an illiberal answer but leaves open the question of an alternative. To characterize Schmitt's vindication of the political dimension as "illiberalism" is thus to misunderstand both its intent and its content. He argues that liberalism has failed to negate the political dimension and succeeded only in obscuring it in non-political language. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that "the astoundingly consistent system of liberal thought, . . . in spite of all defects, is even today in Europe not replaced by any other system." For this reason, as Leo Strauss observed in his essay on *The Concept of the Political*, Schmitt's critique of liberalism proceeds within the horizon of liberalism and can only be completed when we succeed in gaining a perspective beyond liberalism. The fact that Schmitt was forced to make use of liberal elements explains the provisional character of his assertions. Recognizing this situation, Schmitt's declared intention was to do no more than provide "a theoretical framework for an immense problem." Specifically, he suggested that *The Concept of the Political* was "to be thought of as a starting point for objective discussion."

According to Schmitt, the 19th century ushered in an apparently hybrid and impossible joining of aesthetic-romantic and economic-technical tendencies. Romanticism was an "intermediate stage of the aesthetic" between the moralism of the 18th and the economism of the 19th century. As he observed: "The 20th century appeared at the start to be not only the age of technology but also of a religious belief in technology. Indeed, it has often been called the age of technology. But this is only a provisional understanding of the total situation.

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The question of the significance of overwhelming technicity should for now be left open, because the belief in technology is in fact only the result of the particular shift in the direction of the central sphere." For Schmitt, technology and all similar spheres, including the intellect, are multifaceted and can only be understood in concrete political terms. Technology at first appeared as absolutely neutral. But precisely because it serves all equally, it is not neutral: "Out of the imminence of the technical there is no human or intellectual decision, least of all to neutrality." Technology is always an instrument for any type of culture or people. Schmitt's argument is that technology is "culturally blind," which is hardly consistent with "reactionary modernism."

So much for the homework you do not seem to have spent sufficient time doing, preferring to rely instead on the superficial clichés usually dished out in "Intellectual History 101." The situation is no better when *you* politicize the issue by defining it in terms of an unholy coalition of "Right and Left against the middle." Neither is Bendersky right-wing, nor is Eley particularly left-wing. Bendersky simply points out obviously inaccurate readings that you still insist on defending by refusing to consult the sources, while Eley focuses on the conventionality of your account and your confusion of today's with yesterday's meanings in interpreting the past. Eley expressly wrote that he was not questioning "the attractions of [your] list of *liberal desiderata* . . . as a set of abstract political values" but rather your projection backwards of "a set of later 20th century meanings into a 19th century context whose liberalism was very differently formed." His critique is historical, not political. This critique becomes politicized only when it is misperceived as a "Leftist attack on liberalism."

In trying to think your way out of the Left, it is understandable how a smite of paranoia may have sneaked in to make you feel under attack from both the Left and the Right. But these old categories today no longer make much sense: they have become two ideological ghosts occluding rather than clarifying actual political realities. Liberalism has long ceased to be liberal in any traditional sense. In the attempt to escape from your radical frying pan, you have chosen to fall into a liberal fire which has long since died out. What does it mean to be a liberal today? Does it entail defending liberalism against every conceivable attack? Is liberalism *that* perfect?

In your uncompromising efforts to pass for a liberal at all costs, you seem to forget that the strength of the New Left always derived from its demonstrations of the patent contradictions between liberal theory and liberal practice. In this sense, the New Left was always more liberal than liberals themselves. The charge, then and now, remains that liberals have compromised far too much for the sake of expediency. Under the pretense of defending the *form* of liberal institutions, they have thoroughly destroyed their *content*. The question has nothing to do with defending or attacking liberal institutions or liberalism, but of understanding how and why liberal institutions have become mechanisms of manipulation and domination, thus subverting the liberal values they were

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meant to uphold; and why liberals have become neo-conservative New Class ideologues, successfully subverting democratic values even more effectively than any Right or Left challenge. Liberal institutions that have become unaccountable, unresponsive and terminally bureaucratized have to be subjected to a thorough criticism precisely from the viewpoint of a commitment to democratic values. From this it does not follow that one necessarily falls into the trap of either Left or Right authoritarian alternatives — all the more so, since both of these traditional poles have become politically meaningless. Only a weak and threatened liberalism will be afraid to confront on their own terms leading thinkers from either camp.

You think that the Schmitt issue is "a sad event in the history of *Telos*." Why? Because, for a few years, Schmitt opportunistically capitulated to Nazism and became one of its most prominent apologists — to the point of deploying anti-Semitic rhetoric to ingratiate himself with the Nazi power-structure? You do not seriously think that *Telos* would for a moment buy into that nonsense. That point was repeatedly driven home both in the introduction as well as in the rest of the issue. What you suggest is that we should have refused to consider Schmitt's theoretical work because of his political activities in the 1930s. To recycle a well-worn anecdote, when Paul Tillich heard a student at Harvard claim that, since Heidegger had been a Nazi collaborator one should not study his philosophical writings, Tillich responded that if one were to use that criterion one would also have to reject the writings of Plato, who at one time served the tyrant at Syracuse. Following this logic, one would also have to reject the writings of other "classical" political thinkers such as Hobbes and Machiavelli. It is strange to see commitment to liberalism used as a defense of what is ultimately an unwillingness to confront different ideas. This is what the obscurantism of the Right used to be about.

As an alternative to Schmitt, you dig up a whole series of personalities, some of which are only remotely related to political theory. The point is not so much their theoretical relevance, but the limitations and casuistry of what can be published by a small independent journal. Our task is not to belabor the obvious by doing, as you suggest with a straight face, a special issue on Churchill or anyone else with presumably impeccable liberal credentials. Rather, outside the mainstream and free from the pressures and corruption that inevitably goes with it, we focus on those issues and thinkers which, for whatever reasons, have been repressed, ignored, or passed over. Carl Schmitt is a case in point. We will continue to follow this policy and hope that our efforts will not lend themselves to "illiberal," authoritarian, or other misreadings. After all, liberals should try to hang on to at least one of their old values: to keep an open mind.

Sincerely,

Paul Piccone and G. L. Ulmen

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Talking Around Terrorism: A Conference Report

Johnny Payne

A conference on terrorism, like the very mention of the word, galvanizes participants and bystanders into stances both reactive and self-critical. Such was the case at the opening night of the recent conference, *Talking "Terrorism,"* held at Stanford University, February 4-6, 1988. Bracketing "terrorism" was meant to allow a scrutiny which, however brief, could displace the institutionalized name-calling that eventually petrifies into foreign policies. Where handkerchiefs over the face and increased airport security have failed, inverted commas took a chance on succeeding.

Edward Said, the keynote speaker, drew an overflow crowd to his talk on "Identity, Negation, and Violence." He spoke of the West's (Israel's and the US's in particular) unexamined equation of terrorism with Islam, with "bearded clerics and mad suicidal bombers." In his criticism of how, until the 1982 siege of Beirut and South Lebanon, most audiences supposed terrorism to be "an almost platonic essence inherent in all Palestinians and Muslims," Said addressed the vague essentialism on which racial fear and the race for journalistic scoops both feed. His awareness of the composition of the audience was apparent in the caution of his remarks. Although he specifically and predictably described Israel as an identity-shattering colonial power and cynical manipulator of the word "terror," the generally careful tenor of his remarks was audibly anti-climactic, particularly to the extent they worked their way toward the scholarly cliché to "cross the lines that partition existence into so many small fiefdoms."

In the subsequent discussion, both supporters and detractors of the PLO and Israel predictably brushed aside the protective inverted commas, like so many underfed bodyguards, to question Said about his most vulnerable point, the one at which he half-ironically, half-earnestly defined himself as an engaged Palestinian — "someone who, when it comes to terrorism, really *knows*, in the insidious sense of that word, what he is talking about." The nature of the Q&A exchanges made it clear that Said (whose television interviews from *Nightline* ran

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intermittently on several screens of the media installation in the lobby even as he spoke on stage) himself has been long since appropriated by the very commodifying impulses of the television journalists he decried in his talk — a fact which may partially explain the high attendance at his lecture (six to ten times higher than the attendance at any other lecture).

It is unfortunate that David Rappaport's "Reflections on the History of Terrorism" the following morning did not attract many of those to whom Said, by his mere provocative presence the previous night, had given a quick fix of junk news. By historicizing political violence, Rappaport made terrorism seem to be a comparatively minor phenomenon, derivative of the Golden Age of assassinations — the Moslem assassins of the Ottoman Empire, the Russian revolutionaries, the Hindu Thugs — rather than a grimly Dan Ratherish perpetual crisis demanding TV updates and newsbreaks. One of his most interesting claims, and an effective counterpoint to the ongoing barrage of carefully selected jump-cut images in the media installation in the auditorium lobby (Sandinista women revolutionaries, mug shots of Baader-Meinhoff, Jimmy Swaggart standing next to General Noriega), was that publicity can destroy a terrorist movement and that, consequently, dubious but successful organizations such as Peru's "Shining Path" are careful to avoid it.

Christopher Hitchens' bracketing of "terrorism" in "Language As Propaganda" sought to provide the final word on the subject. He rejected "terrorism" as a word "borrowed inexpertly from second-rate imitators of Burke" and so degraded by irresponsible usage that it has practically become a "cliché in search of a meaning." Hitchens' own forensic elegance gave persuasive force to his catalogue of synonyms for describing subtle distinctions among acts of violence and attitudes toward them — "one who fights a foreign occupation of his country without putting on a uniform: guerilla or *guerrillero;* partisan; (occasionally) freedom fighter." But his implied solution of building one's word-power, even in a language flexible enough to accomodate the subtlest degrees of variation, does not erase the discomfort provoked precisely by his *command* of language, and by his Adamic reliance on a naming theory of language: one which effortlessly traces a word back to its first-rate putative owner, Burke, and presupposes an original status against which degrees of abuse can be measured — a kind of linguistic gold standard. It is just this sort of forensically-determined legalist limbo, this indefinite confinement (without parole) of signification, that neither the appropriators nor the designatees of the term *terrorism* tolerate and against which they will continue to rebel — brigands and fascists, anarchists and psychopaths alike — with further and ever more wanton acts of usage. Hitchens failed to see the scholastic futility of duplicating Roget's *Thesaurus*.

Instances of such wanton acts of definitional transgression were abundantly cited in Robin Wagner-Pacifici's story of various accounts of the police assault on the Philadelphia MOVE house. Police and neighbors of the MOVE family seized on the sentimental rhetoric of domestic normalcy and the rationalizing

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one of bureaucracy (both opposed to "terrorism") in order to continue believing that *legitimate violence* is violence controlled by language, i.e., giving orders in a chain of command, even if the consequences mean burning up the neighbors' houses with incendiary bombs, whereas *terrorism* is shouting obscenties on the front porch that violate the neighbors' domestic space in which they claim to lead "normal" lives. Bad language makes bad neighbors, and bad neighbors can be bombed.

Wagner-Pacifici's analysis downplayed the bombing's status as a sensational event, in order to look at "the rhetorical aftermath as a particular case of the general phenomenon of terrorism definitional slippage . . . the generation of several discourses, all circling around the terrorism vortex." Her talk brought terrorism down to an urban American neighborhood, and thereby grounded it in the kind of unexotic setting in which it is hardly ever discussed. Though she consistently stuck to the specifics of that domestic vortex, and thus attempted what was probably the least global definition of terrorism at the conference, the suggestiveness of her remarks was immediately appreciated by her first questioner, who generalized the description of the Philadelphia police's involvement as a description of the phenomenon of police-states. She presumed that all police actions are totalitarian in nature, without consideration for the legitimate interests of the community. Perhaps she should have considered moving into the neighborhood before raising this sort of question.

While Wagner-Pacifici dealt with terrorism on a micro level, Juan Corradi, in his talk on how violence causes states to slip into a "mode of destruction," did so on a macro level. His thesis is "that contemporary violence, far from being — as a long tradition would have it — a 'midwife' of new social systems, is rather a state into which existing systems easily lapse." One of Corradi's most provocative insights is how, in classical Enlightenment social science, both conservative and revolutionary thinkers, because of their belief in the progress of knowledge and their ultimate faith in peace, tend to treat violence as an exception or a pathology. Whether or not there is now more quantitative political violence of the type that lends itself to being called "terrorism" than in the past (Rappaport's historical sketch suggested that there is indeed less), the fact that its ascendancy in our political unconscious has led to its becoming a *bona fide* academic topic (even the subject of university conferences) attests to a qualitative shift in the way contemporary thinkers conceptualize it. This shift appears to have taken place along the lines that Corradi suggested when he spoke of an increasing "inability or refusal to distinguish between war and peace as differentiated conditions, between combatants and non-combatants, between production and destruction, between . . . internal and external war." Intellectuals, journalists, the general populace, and designated state spokesmen alike are so unable to make distinctions, (to paraphrase Corradi) that when it comes time to point the finger, terrorism is always someone else's deed and never a self-referential designation.

Former Colombian Minister of Justice, Jaime Castro, justified his presence at

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the conference mainly by providing an example of such finger-pointing. His "Democratic Answer to the Guerilla Challenge" was to link Colombia's "subversives" directly with the drug trade, and to dissociate the government from it; to deny any connection between the Colombian military and death squads; and to insist that the guerrillas in his country are receiving outside help. His speech was clearly a dry run for his upcoming electoral campaign, or the rehearsal of an official communiqué to be read over national television as a prelude to declaring a state of emergency. What was most stunning about his remarks was their nearly total disengagement from any of the other talks or exhibits, despite his being provided with a professional interpreter. Indeed, Castro's tendency to talk right over the words of his exasperated interpreter, and his general refusal to break down his sentences for her into managable units (despite her numerous whispered requests) provided a powerful subtext about the monologic qualities of state discourse.

Throughout his speech, Castro continually spoke from the perspective of *nosotros los colombianos* ("we Colombians") and "us." Even though much of the conference up to that point had been devoted to questioning such hegemonic assertions, Castro was surprised when his authority to speak for all Colombians was called into question by two members of the audience, one of them Colombian. Their attempts to point out how the specific construction of his "we" implied a power to exclude only seemed to drive him deeper into a remote perplexity. Watching this performance of total non-intersection between state and academy was very unsettling for the audience. It is unfortunate that a more articulate, or at least more engaged state spokesperson on terrorism was not invited to the conference, as it might have made for a more interesting exchange. Or perhaps Castro's reaction is merely a depressing commentary on the impact that talking "terrorism" in the university can be expected to have on public officials.

Hardness of hearing is only one of the ways in which a state can manipulate the quality of talk on terrorism. Ulrich Preuss's analysis of "Legal Representations of Terrorism" emphasized how the comtemporary West German state attempts to control public perceptions of terrorist actions by vacillating between two strategies. "The labelling of a violent action as criminal misconduct communicates to . . . the public that the illegal act is not interpreted as a challenge to the state's authority." The opposite strategy is "to dramatize the violent actions as a serious danger . . . in order to strengthen the bonds of trust and confidence between the government and the citizens." Both are sophisticated ways of forging the quasi-consensus of *we the people* — of diverting attention from the aggression of a state against its own citizens when normal routines are so profoundly violated that terror becomes an almost imperceptible strand in the fabric of daily existence.

Taussig's talk was a performance piece on "Terror As Usual." He sat atop the table next to the lectern, showing showing slides projected on a giant screen be

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hind him. Images of Colombian jungle and urban scenes, alternating with snapshots of people such as Edgar, a sugarcane laborer and ex-soldier, and of Taussig, smiling and dancing, gave the sense of leafing through his personal photo album. The talk itself, a blend of journal, novel, documentary, ethnology, continually turned back on itself in trying to define "our reality as a chronic state of emergency, as a Nervous System" — one which would implicate the speaker in the dynamic of a terror, depending on the strategic and arbitrary use of uncertainty and mystery, and on the mutually vague distrust that makes everyone at least mildly afraid of everyone else. Statistics of death-squad assassinations were set alongside an anecdote about listening to Edgar's stories of his ex-soldier days torturing guerrillas, stuffing wet towels in their mouths, shoving stakes up their fingernails — a tour of duty recounted matter-of-factly while he gently washed Taussig's son's hair, "all giggles and froth." These juxtapositions and shifts were an attempt to enact the difficulty (impossibility?) of standing outside an all-permeating terror-as-usual so that it remains neither an overpowering quasi-reality nor an aloof language situation safely suitable for lectures.

Taussig's presentation in many ways epitomized the nature of the conference, which opened with Richard Karpen's "Nome" — a musical rendition, manufactured out of notes and noise, of a poem written to commemorate the victim of an Italian train bombing. Its chief vocal part, sung by soprano Judith Bettina, was caught somewhere between a melancholy aria and a scream. Some of the attendees complained that "Nome," and the high-tech, potentially slick images of Jeanne Finley's and Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda's media installation, had no place in the serious business of terrorism. There is no question that these aesthetic events (handsomely announced, along with other lectures, in the glossy pages of a sea-green brochure done in a style reminiscent of art deco) are the kinds of inclusions most liable to provoke the accusations that the weekend was essentially an exercise in radical chic.

But terrorism, however defined, comes as a heavily mediated experience. One of the purposes of the conference was to encourage reflection on the multimedia nature of that mediation. Entering the dark, screen-lit lobby to be assaulted by the jumble of familiar TV images and hackneyed headlines made one all too aware of the problem. Moving from that to the more poignant and meditative dissonance of "Nome," and the lecture by the "actual" Said vs. the "Nightline" Said fostered awareness of how much the collective experience of terrorism and the creation of consent to anti-terrorist policy is centered around the banal act of talking "terrorism," or at least listening to prepared and often homogenized versions of it. But the combined effects of lectures, performances, and displays together created a zone of discontent, and not the stylish, comfortable atmosphere that the catchy alliteration of the title of the conference might have initially suggested.

The artists themselves were all too aware of the potential for aestheticizing horror. "When you're making a video installation that deals with the kinds of

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imagery network television thrives on, it is very easy for your work to be coopted into the very same kind of sensationalism," said Finley, "so you have to be very careful about the implications of your selection and arrangement of those borrowed images, especially if they are of a violent nature." Her own and Buarque de Hollanda's care was evidenced in part by their having culled the very photographs — such as the famous one of the Vietnamese general about to shoot a kneeling soldier in the head — which would most easily have depended on their violent aura and shock effect. As conference organizer Beverly Allen put it, the attempt was to "give people some new ways to think about political violence and who gets hurt by representations of it that are not sufficiently analyzed."

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Reviews:

Heidegger on Trial

Victor Farias, *Heidegger et le nazisme*, translated by Myriam Benarroch and J.B. Granet (Paris: Verdier, 1987), 335pp.

In view of the debate it continues to generate in Europe, Victor Farias' indictment of Heidegger should be read with special attention. *Heidegger et le nazisme* is supposed to include shocking revelations about its controversial subject. Contrary to the received opinion that Heidegger only toyed with the Nazis after Hitler's accession to power, Farias claims that Heidegger was always a practicing Nazi. From his Catholic boyhood in the Swabian village of Messkirch, through his ultramontanist education at Constance and Freiburg down to his exposition of an anti-modernist existentialism and his identification with the "German revolution" as rector at Freiburg in 1933, Heidegger, it is argued, clung to a cohesive, nationalist ideology. This ideology flowed into Nazism as soon as the opportunity presented itself.

Farias makes much of Heidegger's lifelong fascination with the 17th-century Viennese court preacher, Ulrich Megerle (a.k.a. Abraham a Sancta Clara). A Swabian who received his early education at Messkirch, Abraham was the subject of both Heidegger's earliest published writing and some of his last meditations. Farias observes that Abraham was both a virulent anti-Semite and an enthusiastic German nationalist. His most famous exhortations, addressed to the Viennese during the plague of 1679 and the Turkish siege of 1683, abound in slighting references to Jews and foreigners. Out of Abraham's preachings, South German and Austrian Catholics drew their own German nationalism, as an alternative to the North-German Protestant form embodied in Bismarck's Second Empire. Anti-Slavic, anti-Semitic, and neo-medieval, this South-German and Austrian variant of German nationalism defended village life against economic and cultural modernization as well as foreign contamination. It found its representative figure in Karl Lueger, the turn of the century Christian mayor of Vienna. Heidegger's family and other Catholic Swabians admired Lueger, who combined strong, honest municipal government with anti-Semitic and xenophobic rhetoric. Farias notes that Lueger, an anti-modernist Catholic, was fond of citing Abraham in his speeches. Lueger's admirers included not only the adolescent Heidegger but the young Adolf Hitler, who chose him as a role model.

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Such facts, which fill the book, do not prove that Heidegger or his companions had early proclivities toward Nazism. Many of these facts are of limited biographical interest, unless one accepts certain doubtful assumptions about Nazism. One such assumption is that Nazi converts typically came from the Catholic Right and the romantic tradition. According to Farias, the Nazis were religious authoritarians who rejected economic modernization and blamed Jews for destroying their medieval sense of community. Of course, Nazi politicians exploited anti-modernist sentiments and blamed Jews and Communists for social crises. Farias is probably correct to assume that German Catholicism and its explicitly medieval heritage was more open to anti-Semitism than German Protestantism. Despite Luther's anti-Jewish outbursts, the Reformation emphasized Christianity's Hebraic roots for the first time since the primitive Church. Yet there is reason to question Farias' assumptions about historical causation. The Catholic Center, which Farias associates with anti-modernist views, was one of the two German parliamentary parties that resisted Hitler in January, 1933. The ultramontanist opponents of the Catholic liberals in Germany, with whom Farias identifies the young Heidegger, were forced into opposition against extreme German nationalism. Richard von Gralik, J. Weiss, Josef Nadler, and other Austrian and German Catholic conservatives mentioned by Farias defended the multinational Habsburg empire, which Hitler detested.

The attempt to relate the *Gralbund* (founded by Viennese Catholic traditionalists in 1920) to a Nazi-type *Bund* illustrates Farias' strained argumentation. Here as elsewhere he relies too much on insignificant or only phonetic associations. Not only Heidegger and von Gralik but countless other South Germans and Austrians, including Jewish intellectuals (e.g., Hugo von Hofmannsthal), praised Abraham a Sancta Clara. Not only Hitler but the staunchly anti-Nazi Social Christian Party in Bavaria identified with the politics of Karl Lueger.

Farias exaggerates the connection between Catholic romanticism and Nazi ideology. Among Heidegger's teachers, he cites Schlegel as the ominous source of those references to "Christian, Germanic civilization." But Schlegel was neither an anti-Semite nor an extreme German nationalist: he was a Francophile, married to Moses Mendelssohn's daughter. The reference to "Christian Germanic" civilization in Schlegel's *Lectures on Universal History* designates the world built by Northern Europeans. Schlegel was describing those who succeeded the Romans and took over their civilizing mission. Though the *Lectures* defend the Holy Roman Empire, they exalt primarily its Christian European character, and only secondarily its ethnic German component. Farias presents as another sorcerer's apprentice the Redemptionist monk, Clemens Maria von Hofbauer, who preached in Vienna during the early 19th century. Having studied his life while writing a book on Catholic romantics, it is hard to imagine what possible link Hofbauer has to the antecedents of Nazism — or to Heidegger's philosophy.

In the first half of the book, Farias repeatedly emphasises Heidegger's support for Nazism both in his youth and as rector of Freiburg. He points out that

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Heidegger hung out with professors and students who had glorified Germany's 1914 "war of aggression." But academics *throughout* Europe had justified their countries' participation in the Great War, sometimes in hysterical tones. Nor was Heidegger's popularity evidence of an anti-Semitic nationalism. His student admirers included Jews and leftists, such as Lukács, Marcuse, and his onetime mistress Hannah Arendt. Adolf Grimme, the Prussian minister of education who contrived to obtain a chair for Heidegger at the University of Berlin in 1930, was a Social Democrat. Grimme had also studied under Heidegger's teacher, Husserl, a German Jew. In 1930 Heidegger was a lapsed Catholic with a politically heterogeneous following, not necessarily an anti-Semite.

Farias notes Heidegger's references to "struggle," "community," and "work" both in his philosophical writings and in his addresses at Freiburg. He even uncovers that Heidegger referred to "national purification" in his youthful publication on Abraham and in a speech to German workers undergoing party indoctrination at Freiburg in October, 1933. Undoubtedly Farias has spent many years tracing these patterns and has come up with convincing results. He makes a strong case against the illusion that Heidegger simply went along with Hitler. In the beginning he served it frentically as an ally of Ernst Röhm's SA, and even after he resigned as rector in April, 1934 he went out of his way to sound like a Nazi. Drawing on Hugo Ott's exhaustive archival work, Farias proves that Heidegger tried to ingratiate himself with the Nazi educational bureaucracy even after 1934, and that he also maintained cordial relations with Eugen Fischer, the director of the Institute for Racial Hygiene in Berlin and an SS member until the end of the war.

All the same, Farias does not prove that there is a significant continuity between Heidegger the philosopher and Heidegger the Nazi activist. Against this view Farias quotes Benedetto Croce and other scholars who expressed shock at Heidegger's adaptation of his philosophical terminology to Nazi ideology. Farias also insists, however, that Heidegger's remarks as a Nazi rector dealt specifically with "*topoi* treated in a more general and abstract way in *Being and Time*." Phrases such as "what is immediately given [*Zuhandenes*]," "instruments [*Zeuge*]," and "being together [*Mit-sein*]" are presented as conceptual entry-points into a Nazi community of blood and soil. But this account ignores the likelihood that an intellectual joining a political movement (a totalitarian one at that) may feel compelled to justify his commitment by reference to his earlier thought. Should Heidegger, while trying to demonstrate his Nazi beliefs, have stressed disjunctions rather than links between his philosophy and his political career? Farias shows that Nazi academic opponents challenged Heidegger's intellectual compatibility with the Third Reich; some also pointed to his previous and even continuing association with Jews.

What Farias makes clear is Heidegger's opportunism before and after Hitler's rise to power. Unlike conservative Catholic and republican professors at Freiburg whom the Nazis found unreliable, Heidegger gladly embraced the new order. He did so without the excuse of Carl Schmitt, who had written against the

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Nazis in the early thirties and may have become a party member to hide his past indiscretions. Heidegger disgraced himself seeking academic honor. He may also have been looking for compensation after his perceived snubbing by the philosophy faculty at the University of Berlin in 1930. As Farias shows, Heidegger turned down the Berlin offer because it came through political channels. Though the object of student worship, this magnetic lecturer discovered that most philosophy professors were skeptical of his writings. The Nazi revolution, particularly as represented by its militant SA wing, seemed to provide an opportunity for recognition and power. Heidegger's proposals for educational reform in 1933 and 1934 reveal far more megalomania than admiration for Hitler.

From what may be gathered about its success, Farias' book has won acclaim for its defects as well as its merits. Articles in *L'Express*, *Der Spiegel*, *The New York Times* and the preface to Farias' book by Christian Jambet all indicate that Heidegger's philosophy, particularly his critique of modern liberal society, has created once again a storm. Jambet moralizes about a rhetorical question that Farias poses in his introduction: Is it really possible to dissociate Heidegger's existential philosophy from his political activities? The real question is: what is behind the present assault on Heidegger? His pandering to Nazi officials in 1933 has long been known. So has his refusal to fess up to his dishonorable behavior during the early years of the Third Reich. Though Farias has expanded the charges, Heidegger's opportunism should not surprise anyone who has studied the matter. Farias and his admirers are tarring with a Nazi brush what Fritz Stern refers to as "illiberalism" — the view that a democratic society is somehow demeaning to human existence.

Disgust with Heidegger as a teacher of illiberal values comes dramatically to the fore in remarks in the February 5 issue of *L'Express* by Luc Ferry. Faulting Farias provocatively but unfairly for trying to "save Heidegger's philosophy" while criticizing his Nazism, Ferry sees the Heidegger-debate as one between democracy's partisans and critics. Heideggerians, particularly in France, have "equated democracy with corporate capitalism and the world of technique." They reject "modernity," which Heidegger condemned along with Enlightenment technological rationalism: "Heidegger himself sees a continuity between men's mastery of their own destiny and the emergence of a world of technique." In reaction to the "project of autonomy which is the meaning of democratic individualism," he preached "anti-voluntarism" and "authenticity" through a return to primitive communal ties. In his desperate flight from the anonymity of urban technological society, Heidegger exalted death as an experience "having no reference to another's ontically limited being [*Dasein*]."

In all fairness to Ferry, he did find something to praise in Heidegger's view of personal authenticity. He refers to it as "the last vestige of humanism, the final defense that one can raise against Nazi inhumanity." Moreover, *L'Express* gave generally balanced coverage to Farias' indictment (unlike *Der Spiegel* which used it to launch into a tiresome sermon on the evils of the German past). Ferry also

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indicates what has occasioned, in the words of one Heideggerian, François Fedier, the "big media attack against the person of Heidegger" — the philosopher's persistent illiberal anti-modernism. This tendency is seen not only in Heidegger's postwar refusal to apologize for his Nazi past, but also in a controversial 1966 interview in *Der Spiegel*. In that interview, Heidegger claimed that German and Greek were the only two languages suitable for philosophical investigation. These casual statements about language became the pretext for questioning his influence in 1966, just as Farias' book did in winter 1987-88. Heidegger's most inexcusable sin seems to have been that he challenged a still dominant mindset. He dared to state that human fulfillment is not likely to be attained through an ever-expanding technology or in a managerial society, and that democratic individualism has resulted in the loss of cultural specificity and in delegitimating long-established community.

Paul Gottfried

Terror and Hope in South Africa

Joseph Lelyveld, *Move Your Shadow* (New York: Times Books, 1984).
William Finnegan, *Crossing the Line* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986).
Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *South Africa Without Apartheid* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

The political situation in South Africa seems to have arrived at a stalemate between the Afrikaner elite and the black majority. While the Afrikaners continue to rely on state violence and the repression of human needs, there are severe limitations on these instruments of control. For example, the whites are dependent upon the industrial and domestic labor of blacks for the reproduction of the economy and relations of privilege. Also, violence and repression not only beget their opposites from the repressed, but also invite strategic action by Western countries. The stalemate for blacks is roughly the same. They cannot utilize revolutionary violence without inviting their own genocide and the potential loss of Western sympathy. Moreover, blacks also need the economy and the relations of privilege to reproduce themselves in the absence of alternative means of securing their material livelihood.

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Democratic change therefore is unlikely to come through either revolutionary violence or the moral protest of the West. It is in the intermediate realm of culture, including language and education, and resettlements and political organizations, including the African National Congress, labor unions and township associations, that both parties in the struggle have sought to intervene and contest. Since the Afrikaner state must avoid violence to signify its ability to rule, and since revolutionary violence seems genocidal, the real political struggles in South Africa center on power and cultural struggles in the homelands, the schools and the workplaces. Blacks, while not revolutionary, have also not been passive, and have adapted traditional forms of struggle — boycotts, strikes, counter civic associations — to the political situation. Neither party is winning nor losing, although the stalemate bears seeds of its inevitable transformation.

While Adam and Moodley's critical theoretical analysis is crucial to an understanding of the current political situation in South Africa, it is also important to examine recent history and daily events. In this respect, the books by Lelyveld and Finnegan are important, although lacking in politically constructive analysis. *Move Your Shadow* is an unforgettable account of current twists and distortions in Afrikaner practices which, in Lelyveld's judgment, have resulted in a new form of apartheid — one that is altering the social and political landscape.

Lelyveld's writing is both compelling and of topical interest and importance, and it comes as no surprise that he was awarded the 1986 Pulitzer Prize for his work. Serving as the New York Times correspondent in Johannesburg in 1965, he was expelled from the country eleven months later for his outspoken criticism of South Africa's racial policies. Despite this expulsion, his request to return 15 years later was granted, and one can only speculate that while the authorities sought to take a firm stand against foreign criticism (by expelling Lelyveld), they were not unduly threatened by this symbol of Western liberal politics. It was their hope that he would fall prey to their deception and believe that "reform" was actually taking place. To the contrary, Lelyveld found on his return that the Afrikaner's determination to keep ultimate power in white hands was forever unchanged, and that it took more desperate forms yielding new contradictions. He claims he was almost welcomed back by the authorities in their "urge to be understood, coupled with their need to believe their own propaganda about how much had changed" (p. 4).

Very early in the book, Lelyveld draws the reader into moral outrage by his skillful probing beneath the surface to illuminate the Afrikaner ruling party's deception in claiming to uphold civilization, while at the same time destroying it. He writes of apartheid as being no longer a concept but a "screen that hides the vast reality of black South Africa from most whites . . . yet on the screen of apartheid, whites can project any version of reality they please, including their own fantasies of life in a society where apartheid does not exist" (p. 28-9).

Seeing through apartheid's new ideological screen, Lelyveld relies neither on public personalities nor on self-proclaimed critics of the system for his own

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accounts and analyses. Rather, he seeks out ordinary blacks, learning from their stories, their first-hand experiences and the expressions on their faces, all telling of the mixtures of unvented emotions — the bitterness, anger, frustration and, sadly, resignation.

Lelyveld's story is twofold. First, it is a study of the Afrikaners' ability to deceive themselves and the rest of the world that they are doing good, when in fact their motives and actions are inherently evil. Second, he vividly documents the effects of the new homeland policy on the lives of blacks and on the self-deception of whites. He shows that the homelands policy, under the rhetoric of tribal political autonomy, is but a new racist strategy to physically remove millions of blacks to settlements far from the view of whites. While vividly portraying the helplessness of blacks, he simultaneously reveals the huge evasions of the whites in their "wilful denial of reality" and in their manner of "explaining, rationalizing and then just simply forgetting" (p. 25).

Power is both a naked and brutal force, and as both Adam and Moodley contend, there is a need to mask it in the language of democratic rhetoric. When ethnic policy and ideology lack the common denominator of a widely acceptable principle, the system's moral legitimacy is vulnerable. Hence apartheid is being clothed in new moral rhetoric, that of supporting black ethnic identity through a homelands policy as a form of "democratization." Yet it is only a mask for banishing blacks to the squalor of desolate and barren countrysides.

Under the homelands policy, vast areas of isolated and unproductive land are turned into independent "nations," where blacks are resettled after having been stripped of their citizenship. Row upon row of crudely-erected tin shacks await these victims of a government design, whereby government trucks sweep into black areas (to be bulldozed for white development) and mercilessly collect the blacks and their meager belongings and dump them in their new homeland. The government's policy of forced removal to the homelands is contradictory, since blacks are to be moved as far as possible from whites, yet they are still dependent upon them for their labor in white areas by day. This insidious creation of mutual dependency, particularly the compliance of the blacks, illustrates the unique power of South Africa's ruling class. The solution to this contradiction is offered by Lelyveld in his chapter on 'Forced Busing,' and is central to his study. The reader is further drawn into moral outrage through the excessive descriptions of the bus system of Kwa Ndebele, a state service, subsidized at $26 million a year simply to ensure that blacks don't live near the white areas where they work. Asking two black friends if he could visit their homes in "closer settlements," Lelyveld boarded the bus at 2 a.m. and rode to and from Pretoria with men and women "resettled" at Kwa Ndebele. On the 190-mile round trip, most of these "commuters" travelled in a bus "designed with hard seats for short hauls on city streets" (p. 127) and arrived back home at night in time to eat and sleep for about four hours before rising to catch the bus again. Those on the buses, who theoretically come to South Africa only to work and then to leave by

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night, are the lucky ones because they have jobs.

Lelyveld's return to South Africa fell between the years of the Soweto uprisings of 1976 and the nationwide revolt commencing soon after he left South Africa in 1983. His visit, therefore, coincided with a period of relative calm — a period, perhaps, more conducive to his own political complacency on what is to be done. Like many Western reporters, he demonstrates a lack of political vision of how to attain a just society, grossly underestimating the power and potential of black resistance, while reluctant to explore the possibilities of change initiated by black labor and political organizations. His attitude toward black liberation movements is somewhat skeptical, and he demonstrates no political empathy for the concept of the A.N.C., maintaining that while militant movements have been "reduced to debating societies," (p. 330) the A.N.C. has "little to celebrate beyond its survival" (p. 330).

Contrary to Lelyveld's deemphasis, the A.N.C. is considered the hope of the black resistance movement by the majority of Black South Africans. Banned in 1960 after generations of nonviolent activism, the group launched a campaign of armed resistance to apartheid, first from clandestine headquarters within South Africa and then from exile in Zambia and Tanzania. With support from the Soviet Union and a growing number of Western nations, the group began to reestablish its presence inside South Africa in the late 1970's. As violent protest against the white government has increased in the last two years, the A.N.C. has become a major force in the liberation struggle of the blacks. As Adam and Moodley argue, the A.N.C. has achieved the undermining of white solidarity, high levels of mass mobilization, and the winning of unprecedented international legitimacy.

Lelyveld's liberal fears of violence and law-breaking render him insensitive to many of the self-determining actions of blacks, thereby contributing to the Western view that blacks are victims in the power struggle. For instance, together with counter-community structures, non-violent civil disobedience has proved effective against Afrikaner intransigence, and on June 16, 1986, the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprisings, there was a massive protest where buses, shops, schools and jobs were boycotted. The boycott confirmed the crippling political potential of South Africa's growing black organizations, including trade unions. Debates in the West need to be renewed concerning not only the more recent role of the A.N.C., but also the labor unions, the township groups, and more recently and importantly, the role of children in the schools, the latter emerging as a vital new element in the current struggle.

Lelyveld's failure to link our sense of moral outrage to the concept of public politics is symptomatic of the political incapacitation and ambivalence of the West. Lacking an understanding of broader political debates and an awareness of the need for a theory of power, Lelyveld operates on the widely-held presumption by Westerners that reality can only be experienced through direct involvement, hence his commitment to writing about "the place itself, its actual

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workings, its here and now" (p. 6). His focus on power and politics, therefore, only reproduces a phenomenological and existential level of reality. What could be said, initially, to be his strength — his graphic illustrations of poignant human dramas — ultimately becomes his weakness, for his photographic reports of human suffering, victimization and indignity dominates at the expense of political clarity. Readers will undoubtedly be mislead by Lelyveld's skill as a writer and fail, at least initially, to identify his ambivalence and ultimate inability to take a political stand. Both he, and to a lesser extent, Finnegan, fall within the category of writers who Adam and Moodley criticize for "the apolitical exercise of merely denouncing the system by reciting its atrocities in repetitive and turgid tracts" (Intro. p. 7).

In addition to the homelands policy, Afrikaners have tried to impose hegemony over blacks by the introduction of a grossly inferior educational system. This move was in reaction to the good quality of black education administered formerly by the mission schools, and has been highly successful in its aim ever since. Introduced without pretense, to retard the intellectual development of the African child and to make African children accept their low position in society as divinely fated, Bantu Education produced an unexpected consequence — widespread student rebellion culminating in the notorious Soweto Riots of 1976, when students revolted against the compulsory 50% usage of the hated Afrikaans language in the schools. Children were shot by the police indiscriminantly, and in the succeeding decade black youth have become politicized at a very early age.

Unlike Native Education, which was introduced without opposition from Africans, Bantu Education immediately met with strong opposition from parents and the A.N.C. Further opposition was mounted when the apartheid principle involved in Bantu Education was extended to universities. The inferior quality of education for African children under the Bantu educational system created, in time, still further opposition — primary and high school children rebelled. Such a response was unexpected, since Bantu Education was intended to make African children accept their low position in society.

Bantu Education was dealt its final blow in 1976 when the Afrikaans language was placed on equal standing with English in secondary schools. When a despised system aligns itself with an unpopular language, the situation can become explosive. Class boycotts took place by Standard IV children (11-12 yrs.) and were soon adopted by other primary and secondary schools all over Soweto. Later, because of the number of deaths among children due to police shootings, sympathy strikes emerged all over South Africa.

Since 1976, opposition to Bantu Education continued to be led by children, creating a unique situation in which eleven year olds have been brought into government opposition. Herein lies evidence of the crucial role to be played by the schools and the youth. Even before these tumultuous changes occurred, it had been evident in the early years at high school that education was a highly

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prized process and seen, as reflected in the measures of educational optimism, to be a critical solution to a variety of problems. As Adam and Moodley contend, education is the only feasible key to a better life and to at least minimal status in a society where most other routes for black advancement are blocked.

Instead of black children accepting their lowly position in South Africa, they become politicized early in their lives. Dube notes that the politics of these children, the recipients of Bantu Education, was and continues to be different from the politics of children schooled in Native Education.[1] Whereas graduates of Native Education favor peaceful change, the present younger generation realize at a tender age that white racism will not reform itself. This is consistent with Adam and Moodley's contention that the universal generation gap has acquired new political significance in African townships among parents and teachers, the latter generally being considered to have aligned themselves to the apartheid order. Most teachers have lost the respect of students through professional incompetence and political docility. To many of these African children, it is through the use of demonstrations and violence that change will take place.

In the years succeeding the Soweto riots of 1976, many more adults became involved in the struggle, joining their counterparts in the country and the nation's youth. In contrast to 1976-77, powerful labor organizations now exist, giving the revolt added strength. Indeed, the 1980s revolt is characterized by far-greater political thrust. The boycotts that have taken place in schools throughout the country have finally signaled a total rejection of apartheid education and of the overall attempts at hegemony imposed by the Afrikaner state.

In addition, the A.N.C. has developed an alternative school system in Tanzania that has met the needs of African children more adequately than the Government-imposed racist systems, and has thus been adopted by the A.N.C. as the most suitable prototype for further developments in education. The history of the school, the Soloman Mahlangu Freedom College, dates back to the killing of children by police during the 1976 Soweto riots, which led to a mass exodus of African children from South Africa to bordering states. Over 1000 children left home to join the military wing of the A.N.C. The exodus of so many children, from age eleven to young adulthood, caught the A.N.C. unprepared, and the vast majority were either too young or politically unprepared for the tasks of the liberation army. An alternative was to get these children to school. For the first time, the A.N.C. discovered that, although it had spoken of education in its Freedom Charter, it had never decided on the form this education should take. It was eventually decided that the syllabus be biased in favor of natural sciences, to counter both Native and Bantu Education. Further, students were to be prepared to enter universities all over the world. The major educational issues were subsequently resolved. First, English was to be the medium of instruction from kindergarten to matric. Second, it was decided that the separa-

1. Ernest Dube, "The Relationship between Racism and Education in South Africa," *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (February, 1985), pp. 86-89.

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tion of mathematics and arithmetic was artificial and therefore unnecessary. Third, all students would be required to take math, English, the Development of Society and the History of the Liberation Struggle in South Africa. Optional subjects such as biology, general science, geography and agricultural science were to be taught as well. Finally, innovative teaching methods that were better suited to the learning styles of African children were developed.[2]

Finnegan's *Crossing the Line* serves an important public function in creating an awareness of the importance of education and of children in the current struggle. Nevertheless, the book reveals the same moral sensitivity and political ignorance and naivete of Western observers that also characterizes Lelyveld's book. After surfing the beaches of Asia and the Pacific, Finnegan, a Californian, made his way from Sri Lanka to Capetown partly to escape the hazards of tropical Asia and partly to explore the surf and pizza parlors of a comparatively- developed country. However, his flagging financial position precluded the planned "Cape to Cairo" route and instead he found himself teaching in a high school for 'coloreds' on the Cape flats outside Capetown. Although readily admitting that, as a white Westerner and transient teacher, he was unable to make any real contribution to the black struggle, *Crossing the Line* was nevertheless inspired by his experiences during 1980.

Early in his book Finnegan involves the reader in his search for a job and in his subsequent initiation at Grassy Park High School. He traces the development of reform in his curriculum and his pursuit of student motivation. For the latter, he often resorted to his own school experiences, trying to foster academic competition "as if rewarding children who could act whitest" (p. 131). He slowly began to see a contradiction in the goals he established, seeking on the one hand "hard-working, attentive, disciplined students, while on the other, trying to encourage critical, independent habits of the mind" (p. 132). Finnegan recognized this contradiction as probably inherent in the concept of a liberal education, and his insights into the limitations of his own American education form a refreshing critique of an education system steeped in capitalistic values of competition and individualism. The paradox, as Finnegan sees it, was in trying to transform his students into "exotic versions of his college-bound school mates" — especially through his careers counseling program — "when he liked them so much as they were" (p. 132).

Among his early impressions were the "extraordinariness of the children's relations with each other" and of the "lack of nastiness" (p. 33). He found that social life in general was "imbued with an amazing collective good sense" (p. 33) as compared with his own "homophobic, rabid individualistic schooling that seems to lack this warmth and healthy emphasis on the group" (p. 34). Finnegan's open-mindedness, enthusiasm and dedication in trying to help these students — whom we get to know intimately through his vivid character sketches — is nonetheless compelling and his contribution to the lives of these

2. *Ibid.*

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students is far greater than that of some of his colleagues who seem to share the government's view of the pupils as "expendable and predestined low achievers in the larger society" (p. 112).

Alternating the focus of his narrative between his personal experiences as a teacher and some limited analysis of the political and historical situation in South Africa, Finnegan describes how he subtly sought to reform the curriculum, attempting to instill his students with a greater awareness of South Africa's position in the world; encouraging them, in his role as career advisor, to aim higher in their personal ambitions. However, through conversations with more politically-enlightened staff members, Finnegan began to see that individual achievement was, in fact, counter revolutionary. His reform and career-counseling programs were largely going nowhere, since as a foreigner he was ignorant of local conditions, language and culture, and since his individualistic dreams of the world eventually led him to doubt his position as a role model. Far from being a community-based initiative, he realized his careers project was simply "missionary work" (p. 309).

Unlike the blacks, the 'colored' population was not a victim of the government's attempt to use education as a means of being steered toward a "homeland" (the use of mother tongue was compulsory for the first eight years of schooling for blacks in an attempt at retribalization). However, the Bantu Education Act, according to Finnegan, still had important implications, as it was generally held that the quality of colored schooling had also deteriorated since the government wrested responsibility for education from the churches. According to Professor Mphahlele, the Bantu Education Act had achieved many of its anti-educational objectives: "We've lost a whole generation since about 1960, when it really began to take effect. All that generation can hardly articulate themselves. They can't hold conversations for long and they can't initiate things. Their dependence on whites is remarkably high" (p. 123). At the same time, Bantu Education generated so much resentment that it became a mobilizing issue itself, triggering the Soweto uprising.

A major part of Finnegan's book is devoted to an account of a student boycott, during which students presented themselves at school but refused to attend regular classes. He provides a compelling account of the "liberation curriculum" improvised by students and a politically-divided faculty. According to the *Cape Times*, the boycott was simply "the community giving notice that the rising generation will not work the machinery of its own oppression," (p. 169) and, through Finnegan's accounts, we experience the "energies that refusal liberated" (p. 169). Student government, formerly a "pallid, bureaucratic exercise, was suddenly a vital reality" (p. 169). The extent of the grass-roots participation was also obvious from the reports being delivered to classes from delegates to various committees. "It was democracy in action and full of pleasant surprises" (p. 169). Guerilla theatre bloomed, student discussion groups thrived, and one class in particular seemed to have found, through the boycott, "the solidarity it

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has so conspicuously lacked" (p. 171).

From the beginning, the more sophisticated students among the boycott leaders tried to stress that the boycott was not directed primarily against the Government, and was not ultimately interested in concessions. Rather, its function was to educate the black community by arousing political awareness and improving morale. After three months, government force caused the cancellation of the school boycotts. Finnegan's political naivete is reflected in his analysis of the boycotts at the end of this period. While he eventually realized their repeated use to be an underlying weakness of blacks in South Africa — as an end only — he discovered the boycott leaders to be way ahead of him in their thinking about the limitations of the boycott. "Seen not as an end in itself, the boycott can achieve short-term victories — important because they give students confidence in themselves, teach them through practical experience the basic lessons of organization, and create the climate wherein political consciousness could flourish" (p. 179).

Nevertheless even the reader experiences a level of exhilaration through the experiences of the boycott. "Students' energy for debate seemed inexhaustible" (p. 181) and, according to Finnegan, they were acquiring a "deep skepticism toward every aspect of society, and particularly toward its masters. They no longer needed to have the government's rhetoric translated for them. Student's conscientization seemed to remove an almost physical veil of deference," (p. 209) and a "critical new element of reckless confidence emerged in the general constant mass of black anger" (p. 219).

Like Lelyveld, Finnegan confines his accounts largely to direct reports of experiences and events — seeing South Africa as "a place to be contemplated, understood and described" (p. 357). While Lelyveld represents a generation of Americans burnt out politically from events of the 60s and 70s, and skeptical of mass movements or political mobilization, Finnegan's contrasting youth and relative immaturity, while still displaying a naive Western political ambivalence, is refreshing in its more open-minded approach. Finnegan readily realizes and admits his shortcomings as a white Westerner embroiled by chance in the struggle of a liberation movement. He soon became aware that his perception of South African life was unconsciously being determined by his American background, and he quickly became cynical toward some of his recently-published magazine articles in which he described Third World politics and daily life — "all the permutations of my first world reactions for the leisure time amusement of a few Americans" (p. 356).

While Finnegan's narrative is informative, instructional and highly readable in his vivid descriptions of the day-to-day experiences of colored students at Grassy Park High, he is restricted by his lack of a broader theoretical understanding of the political issues pertaining to South Africa. His lack of any theory of power highlights his inadequacy in being able to perceive the relationship between domination and acquiescence, hence his initial repeated questioning of

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the ability of the apartheid state to endure. Disillusioned by his somewhat unsuccessful attempt at curriculum reform, Finnegan completed his year's term at Grassy Park High, and his ethnography becomes a travelogue of his final journeys in South Africa. In keeping with his "go, see and describe" approach to the political situation, he avoids attempting to formulate any real political conclusions, and his loss of zest and somewhat confused state almost constitutes an admission of failure.

Implicit in Finnegan's descriptions is the notion that the schools are currently playing a profoundly important role in empowering South Africa's youth, and that their educational program could be seen to be the essence of education for liberation. However, beyond descriptions and an admission of his own lack of foresight in not recognizing the importance of the boycott as a means rather than an end, he does not adequately address the issue of the crucial role to be played by the schools and the youth of South Africa. Since the Soweto Uprising, demands of South African youth have begun with school-related grievances but have invariably grown to include community-wide and class-related issues. Furthermore, since the boycotts, many parents have become involved in parent-student committees which have later crystallized into civic associations. Since the boycotts of the 80s and the banning of public meetings, such associations have developed into activist organizations characterized by no formal structure, no office or administration base, no members — only supporters whose grievances and demands are coordinated by whatever means possible under conditions where troops occupy townships, meetings are banned and activists are detained, disappear or are murdered. In August 1985 the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) was outlawed. This, together with the banning of United Democratic Front (U.D.F.)-affiliated black high school organizations, constitutes an admission by the government of the central role played by the African youth in the struggle. Of considerable political significance is the fact that 50% of South Africa's black majority are under 25 years, mostly urbanized and literate. Hence the role of South Africa's youth will continue to be a potent force in the liberation struggle.

While students are being taught that they must expect petty jobs, the daily violence of the townships, and an economy and society where entrenched racial discrimination is the prime legal determinant of individual social positions, they are learning that they all share a common enemy — the apartheid state. In that context, specific demands made by students must be seen as symptomatic of the rejection of apartheid education and society as a whole, and as a measure of the political consciousness of African youth in general.[3]

Adam and Moodley's *South Africa Without Apartheid* provides a more politically-grounded argument than do Lelyveld and Finnegan. Their perspective is enhanced by the nature of their unique backgrounds which include, on Adam's

3. Pierre Bigras, "Aspects of the Struggle," *Monthly Review*, Vol. 37, No. 11 (April, 1986), pp. 77-81.

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part, a political education in Weberian sociology and critical theory at the University of Frankfurt; Moodley, an Indian South African ("colored") educated in the United States, met and married Adam in West Germany. Their critical perspective, focusing on the rationalization of the structure of power and the continuing legitimation crisis of the apartheid regime, is in contrast to the personal moralism of so many Western observers.

The authors confess to a reformist bias, criticizing the common Western tendency to view blacks only as pawns and victims in the power struggle, leading to irrelevant political positions of revolutionary extremism, on the one hand, and moral condemnation, on the other. They argue that the problem with such absolutes is that they absolve the writer from "attempting to imagine how to exploit the state's contradictions and to utilize the new openings for the opposition" (p. 8 Intro.).

They argue that "the first precondition for effective challenge lies in an exact knowledge of how the system works, rather than in a false diagnosis of its eclipse" (p. 169). Since South Africa's power structure is historically unique, it cannot be understood in terms of class, colonial, or ethnic intergroup political models. Since religion has not been an issue in poisoning intergroup relations in South Africa, as in India, Ireland, or Lebanon, such religiously-inspired resistance hardly applies. Furthermore, as Adam and Moodley continue to argue, the colonial solution of a white departure does not apply to South Africa, since it is not purely a colonial problem. In contrast to those stigmatized minorities, such as India's caste-ranking system, who have no hope of successfully challenging groups in power, the racial indignities of black South Africans is far greater since the racial discrimination lacks religious foundations.

The structure of apartheid involves a stalemate between whites resolved to maintain hegemony at all costs and blacks equally resolved to acquire modern liberal freedoms. It is a system that will collapse from neither the moral pressure of the West nor from internal revolution. Nonetheless, there is a contradiction between the need for the Afrikaners to legitimate their rule to ensure black compliance and labor *and* to deny the basic civil rights of choice of employment and residence free geographical movement and political participation. Since apartheid does not originate in cultural or democratic consent, Adam and Moodley demonstrate that there is a permanent crisis of legitimation — dealt with through various stop-gap measures to ensure short-term control.

The primary means of hegemony are the fostering of material dependency and, when necessary, the use of state violence and coercion. "The routine of daily drudgery in South Africa, with many basic needs denied, guarantees compliance almost by itself, independent of supportive ideologies" (p. 142). Even "radical disruptions of daily routine are frequently accepted because of this dependency" (p. 143). Rather than crude force in every instance, subtle pressure is applied. With a large proportion of proletarianized wage labor directly employed by the state, black workers are inclined to "identify with their work in order to

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give meaning to a meaningless occupation" (p. 144), coupled with the status of a steady job. When dependency breaks down and blacks resist, the state employs violence, detentions, and bannings. In addition, coercion in the form of geographical resettlement, the currently most popular strategy, is effective in refostering dependency. However, these methods erode international legitimacy, increase resistance among victims, and are unstable and costly. The recurrence of crisis, therefore, forces Pretoria to shift away from dependency and coercion to achieve legitimation.

One attempted means of compliance, albeit a partial one, is the meritocratic identification of talented blacks for entry into higher education for ultimate professional and administrative posts. Adam and Moodley illustrate the way in which the system replaced "racial privilege with privileged knowledge" (p. 166) — by "parity in pay scales for identical black and white qualifications at the professional level" (p. 166). In the switch from race to competency, the ruling race retains most of the qualifications while the "unqualified are left to blame themselves for their lot" (p. 166). The success of such a technocratic ideology is reflected in the high value blacks place on education as a "way out of their misery" (p. 166). However, having diffused elite discontent, "access to credentials remains grossly unequal" (p. 166). One reason for this is the legal establishment of the colored and Indian groups, who are allowed greater educational privileges. Thus the opening of education to blacks is only partial and therefore cannot be used to achieve legitimacy.

Finally, consumerism becomes a substitute for legitimacy; and urban blacks are now well on the way to becoming part of the consumer culture. Education and status achievement, therefore, replace political involvement or ideological commitment. When "treated as racial outcasts, deprived of individual status and collective dignity, ostentatious consumption may be the only avenue for the assertion of individual worthiness" (p. 159). According to the authors, "when ideological integrators as powerful as modern advertising, videos and religious values are shared, little basis for ethnic separation remains (as compared with colonial outsiders in the Ghandian tradition who abstained from the life-style of the colonizer)" (p. 159). The general media message is that "only the strong and law abiding citizen can survive unharmed," and the "strong language and outrage about discrimination adds to the media's political credibility" (p. 162).

While these measures are purely stop-gap, the legitimation crisis continues to assert itself in the desperate strategy of the Homelands Policy and, most recently, in the Miner's Strike, the biggest wage strike in South Africa's history. Therefore, Adam and Moodley suggest that apartheid may be in a period of permanent crisis, albeit a legitimation crisis, which is opening cracks for popular resistance and dysfunctions for the system as a whole. The new political effects of blacks through township, educational, and union struggles suggest the weakening of apartheid. In contrast to the revolts of 1976-77, the powerful labor organizations which now exist have eroded the state's coercive military power, and

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Adam and Moodley predict that the South African state will face its most serious challenge on the labor front through individual action (as evidenced by the Miner's Strike) and through consumer boycotts. However, they fail to recognize the equally serious challenge posed by the children in the schools, as illustrated by Finnegan.

It is through the preceeding analysis that Adam and Moodley argue, in a controversial thesis, that South African apartheid is evolving from an ethnic state, where power and privilege is linked to race, into a modern, Western model. In the latter, where rationalization absorbs or defuses racism, blacks are being incorporated as workers and consumers along with other forms of control and legitimacy of a nature more technocratic than ideological. The process of Western rationalization alters and defuses racial inequalities such that blacks are not mere objects of racial enslavement in their primary social functions. Adam and Moodley even suggest an emerging cultural homogenization, writing that "despite the militant rhetoric, ideological differences between blacks and whites are not as rigid as the color classification suggests, and common Christian values and a common Westernized consumerism engender similar aspirations" (p. 248). Yet a contradiction exists between the incorporation of blacks into a post-industrial South Africa and the strategic and technocratic means of ensuring compliance (e.g., homelands resettlement and Bantu education). It is this contradiction that blacks have politicized as an issue of civil rights.

The central political conclusion that follows from this analysis is that blacks are not revolutionary subjects in the manner of violence born from the "wretched of the earth." The Western rationalization of South Africa, the absence of ideological legitimation, and the technocratic incorporation of blacks into the system imply a post-revolutionary era. Thus the prospects for black liberation inhere only within a social-democratic framework, at least partially supported by new areas of common interest and compromise between whites and blacks. The authors discuss the practical political importance, in this context, of federalism, economic regional development, decentralization of power to non-racially selected local authorities, and new citizenship regulations in an undivided South Africa with universal franchise. In addition, they argue that the A.N.C. needs Western support and encouragement, since the success of a multi-racial South Africa depends entirely on the legalization and incorporation of the A.N.C., whose importance within the black community has been reflected at the local township level.[4]

Many will bristle at the thesis that apartheid is being internally transformed by the logic of its development into a social form, the contradictions of which can only be settled through social-democratic reform. In contrast, those who only

4. Before deciding how to end a boycott of tending schools, for example, a committee of parents from Soweto travelled to Zimbabwe to seek advice from A.N.C. representatives there. Cf. Mark Uhlig, "The African National Congress: Waiting for the Day," *Apartheid in Crisis*, Edited by Mark A. Uhlig (New York: Vintage Books, 1986) pp. 149-175.

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see the historic perpetuation of abject racial oppression may charge Adam and Moodley with starting from the moral premise of reformism, shaped within comfortable academic confines, which over-determines an analysis promoting a process of rationalization, intergroup homogenization, and civic enfranchisement. For these critics, the choices remain those of the two extremes of revolutionary violence or moral outrage. Yet if Adam and Moodley are correct, the apostles of violent change through mass uprisings and the advocates of moral witness through divestment are whistling in the dark.

Rosalie McColl and ***John Alt***

Back to The Future

Robert Kutner, *The Life of the Party* (New York: Viking, 1987), 264 pp., $18.95.

The Democrats, uprooted from their ancestral ties since 1968, have now been wandering in the desert for twenty years. Lost, beset by identity crises, they have been unable to locate a new moral address. Bob Kutner's *The Life of the Party* brings a message of hope to this lost tribe. He tells them that you *can* go home again, home to that mix of social democracy and economic populism that made the New Deal the envy of depression-era Europe.

Kutner, probably America's most respected liberal journalist, argues that for all their differences on social and foreign policy issues, what unites potential Democrats is a shared sense of economic grievance. "Democrats can," he writes, "regain their status as a majority party only by rebuilding a majority coalition of ordinary wage and salary earning people, whose political interests are not identical to the wealthy." Kutner is by no means alone in arguing that good social-democratic economic policy is also a good electoral strategy, yet his arguments have struck many with the force of revelation. But the evidence of the essential economic liberalism of the great mass of Americans has been obvious, for all those who cared to look, all through the period of Republican presidential ascendency.

The Democrats' problem, argues Kutner, sounding for all the world like an early 1970s neo-conservative criticizing McGovernism, is that they have emphasized social and foreign policy issues at the expense of the economic programs which once tied the great mass of ordinary people to the party of Roosevelt. The

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generation that came of age in the 1930s and 1940s benefited from social security for their parents, the GI Bill of Rights, and federally-guaranteed mortgages for themselves. But after 1960, he laments, the New Deal state "became a welfare state for 'them' — the dependent poor — as broad class based measures were replaced by race specific programs which offered little to the white working class."

Kutner blames this mistake on the party's increasing dependence on politically "androgynous" millionaires, e.g., the Hollywood celebrities who promote various causes from saving the seals to world peace even as they promote their own virtue, while ignoring the more mundane concerns of ordinary citizens. It is an appealing argument. Who can forget the influence Shirley Maclaine, the Malibu Maoist, once had on the party until she turned to interstellar incantations. But a good cause will not hallow a bad argument.

There are two problems with Kutner's thesis. First, he assumes that once upon a time, even if only under the pressure of the Great Depression, the Democrats were simply a class-based party. The Democrats have, Kutner's benchmark of the depression era aside, always had a primarily cultural basis. They have, since the Civil War, been the party of outsiders, such as white Southerners and Northern Catholics of all social classes who were culturally marginal to the Yankee mainstream. What has changed over the past three decades is how marginality is defined. When the British Labourites, similarly a party of outsiders, placed almost their sole emphasis on economic class interests, it produced both a revival of the Liberal Party and a break-away Social Democratic Party. Both ended up serving as the vehicle for more economically conservative but socially liberal upper middle class interests.

Secondly, he assumes that, should the Democrats be better able to deliver the bacon, the deep cultural and social division among economic liberals on issues like capital punishment, gay rights and racial quotas could be smoothed over. That seems unlikely. In West Germany, for instance, the Social Democrats, a party which has done far better in delivering on social equality than American Democrats, are beset by cultural division parallel to ours. What makes the situation for American social democrats so different and so much more difficult than in Western Europe, which Kutner mentions only in passing, is our rights-based political culture. A rights-based politics legitimates individual prerogatives independent of consequence or communal context. In the years since *Brown v. Board of Education*, the central arena of liberal political struggle, as the Bork hearings made abundantly clear, has been the struggle to absolutize court-generated rights. A rights-based politics, however, has, for all its value, the effect of sharply dividing people.

How does one compromise over rights said to be sanctified by the Constitution? Take, for instance, the question of abortion. In America the right to choose an abortion is said to be part of the right of privacy which confers Constitutional protection on differing life-styles independent of the social conse-

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quences. Where abortion is a matter of constitutionally-guaranteed individual choice, the possibility of compromise between competing moral claims or the interest of the individual versus the interests of the community is impossible. Morally-infused conflict is guaranteed. In the largely Catholic West-German welfare state, by contrast, the abortion issue became a matter of legislative compromise rather than absolute right. The legislators, much as their American counterpoarts might have done had they the opportunity, placed the demand for abortions in a social context in which it was assumed that an individual's rights were part and parcel of a common life. The upshot was that in West Germany the potentially explosive abortion issue was settled by legislative compromise in which it was possible to balance competing moral interests.

Abortion is not the only area where the totemization of life-style choice has, in parodying the supremacy of consumer choice in the economic marketplace, taken on absurd dimensions. It is -20F° as I write. But on a variation of the old theme that the rich and poor alike have the right to sleep under the bridges of the river Seine, the New York branch of the ACLU is insisting that the homeless, no matter how deranged, have an absolute right to freeze to death on the streets of New York, if they so choose.

In *The Life of the Party* and in his other writings, Kutner frequently turns to Swedish policy as a model for the US to emulate. The qualities Kutner justly admires in the Swedish welfare state — its mix of economic egalitarianism and efficiency — are incompatible with a right-based politics. While most Americans grow up believing that the state is a constant threat to their liberties, Swedish children learn that *l'etat c'est nous*. At birth each Swede is given an identity number useful for distributing benefits and collecting taxes with a minimum of fraud as well as in extracting money from fathers who have abandoned their children. Proposals for a similar ID card in America have met with outraged cries about the government threat to privacy.

What Kutner never acknowledges is that there are two competing forms of American left-liberalism which lay claim to our consciences. One supports a majoritarian struggle for equality within society; the other, which represents far more than the conceits of Hollywood celebrities, seeks to free the individual from the tyranny of social constraint. Both find their natural home in the Democratic Party which has been unable to accomodate both the well-to-do gay who says "no enemy, not even AIDS is worse than a repressive majority," and the aging white auto worker, torn between his fear of crime in Detroit and the sight of GM executives growing filthy rich off their own managerial failures.

In short we can't go home again. The New Deal was built on that moment in time when FDR could proclaim, "thank God our troubles are only material." It was built, as Kutner fails to understand, not only as an assault against the depredations of the free market but as well on the power of lawyers who, in the words of FDR, wanted "to play all the speaking parts" in our political life. That time has passed. Eclipsed during the New Deal, the bar has come back with a

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vengeance. It's revival has come at the expense of a common political life. The groups that once had to publicly compromise and coalesce under the Democratic banner to gain their political ends, today find it more expeditious to assert their interest in the relative privacy of the courts, unfettered by broader concerns.

Reaganism has been the reflection, not the cause of the privatization of American life. If Roosevelt's idea of "extending to our national life the old principle of community" now seems far-fetched, that is because most Americans are now politically, if not culturally, homeless. Increasingly they either live in temporary suburban accomodations — one in five move every year — or strife-torn cities. The sense of social solidarity which built huge New Deal majorities in the cities has been replaced by intense racial hostility and a situation in which urban political banners are merely flags of convenience for the warring racial factions.

We live with the fragments of an exploded consensus. The bonds which held Americans together, always weaker than in Europe, have been further frayed by the mixed blessings of moral pluralism. In a more fraternal society, liberty and equality might not be in such harsh conflict. Nevertheless, the reality is that the numerous shrewd schemes Kutner proposes to harness public action to private need (and they alone are worth the price of this book) are likely to be put to use not by some future activist government on behalf of social solidarity but, rather, towards the end of state measures serving individual pleasures.

Fred Siegel

Counterculture and Consumerism

Martin Green, *Mountain of Truth: The Counterculture Begins, Ascona, 1900-1920* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1986).

On the Swiss shore of the Lago Maggiore, in the canton of Tessin, the village of Ascona became a center for cultural critics experimenting with alternative life-styles in the first decades of the century. The geographical location, in the middle of a stunning Alpine landscape, made the spot attractive, as did its distance from the urban centers of industrial Europe which the intellectuals attracted to Ascona derided. In addition, the proximity to an international border not only permitted some clandestine smuggling activities to go on but, more

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importantly, intrigued the radicals, whose anarchism and anti-authoritarianism could bring them into conflict with the police forces of any number of states.

Green sets the stage in one more way by emphasizing that, at Ascona, intellectuals fleeing the industrial progress of the German North or (more often) the backward imitation of that North in Austro-Hungary encountered a radically different culture and mentality. For Ascona "was peasant, not industrial; impoverished, not prosperous; obscurantist, not progressive; in a word, it was underdeveloped; in a word, it was southern . . . . Ascona stands where the mountain ranges stop, where the Italian plains begin, where the triumphant north stops, with its Protestant energies and its technological achievements, and where the subdued south begins, with its immemorial peasant agriculture and its evocations of earlier civilizations" (117-118). Not that the local peasantry was particularly well disposed to the bohemians; Green suggests that the contrary may be closer to the truth. Nor does one find the bohemians articulating a critique of local social conditions and poverty. The radicals who came to Ascona were by no means progressives who would be shocked by "rural idiocy" and commit themselves to improvement. Instead, they could appropriate the peasant setting and, probably misunderstanding it, use it as a frame for their own cultural experiments: subsistence agriculture represented an alternative to the perpetual accumulation of capitalism, traditional social forms were counterposed to a blind progress, and the rural religiosity of peasant Catholicism seemed to echo the irrationalism of sophisticated intellectuals.

Ascona had a radical prehistory. Followers of Garibaldi escaped Austrian forces by finding refuge on the Brissago Islands in the Lago Maggiore. In 1869, Bakunin settled nearby, and during the last decades of the 19th century the area attracted a sprinkling of Tolstoyans, vegetarians, and other cultural radicals. The story gets going, however, in 1900 when Hendrik Oedenkoven, wealthy son of a Belgian industrialist, purchased a hill in Ascona, Monescia (the previous owner had hoped to found a theosophical colony there), renamed it "Monte Verità" and, with some companions, established a nature-cure sanitarium. During the next 20 years, Ascona became a crossroads for a wide range of artists, intellectuals, and radicals: founding figures in modern dance such as Isadora Duncan, Rudolf Laban, and Mary Wigman; the psychoanalyst Otto Gross, with his ties to Freud and Jung; the von Richthofen sisters, Max Weber, D. H. Lawrence, Hermann Hesse, Friederike von Reventlow. The anarchist Erich Mühsam spent time there, but Gustav Landauer did not, although he was apparently revered by many of the Asconans. Even Lenin and Trotsky may have visited (182).

The center of the book is a chronology of the visitors to Ascona, their interactions with broader European developments, and their various concerns: aesthetic innovation, cultural feminism, psychotherapy, holistic medicine, anarchist politics etc. Green's account is important at the very least as a salutary corrective to the standard English-language accounts of early 20th Central European

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culture, with their focus on either Viennese aestheticism or a proto-fascist German irrationalism. He makes a compelling case for the contemporary relevance of Asconan thought in the wake of the 1960s counterculture, the new social movements, and especially the ecological and cultural initiatives in contemporary Western Europe. He has therefore chosen an epigraph, a 1983 graffito on the Swiss National Library, which demonstrates how close contemporary gestures of protest remain to the vitalism which inspired the radicals at Monte Verità: "*Wahrheit kann nicht doziert sondern gelebt*," i.e., "Truth cannot be taught, it can only be lived."

The first three chapters (about half the book) present short biographies of presumably representative denizens of Ascona. Each is, of course, a particular case, and thus it is here that the complexities and internal contradictions in cultural radicalism become most evident. The first is devoted to Otto Gross, the maverick psychoanalyst caught in the emergent tension between Freud and Jung and persecuted by his father, the influential criminologist Hanns Gross. Some of this material overlaps with Green's splendid earlier work, *The von Richthofen Sisters*, and Gross has been discussed by Russell Jacoby in *The Repression of Psychoanalysis*. Green highlights Gross' interconnection with the Ascona network, and thereby suggests that Gross's theoretical contributions — the critiques of erotic repression, institutional authoritarianism, and the patriarchal family — were more or less symptomatic of this new counterculture.

Yet when one begins to look at Gross more closely, the problematic character of the counterculture begins to come into focus. Certainly, the dramatic struggle with the father, who was able to rely on the power of the police to have his son institutionalized, suggests a paradigmatic generational conflict between the establishment forces of the past, on the one hand, and a cultural-revolutionary youth on the other. Nevertheless, in retrospect there is little reason to turn Gross into a hero. For example, Green draws attention to Gross' early insistence on two alternative mental types, which one can recognize now as the familiar turn-of-the-century fixation on an opposition between the bourgeois and the artist. No doubt such bohemian radicalism could have considerable protest potential. Yet Gross goes on (in Green's paraphrase): "The opposition of types can be described . . . in terms of the antithesis between the man of civilization and the man of culture, or between the realistic man of battle and the solitary shaper of images. The first is proper to stormy eras in which empires are established; the second is the product of the high culture that grows out of empire" (25). Evidently, Gross' dichotomy can turn out to be fully congruent with the standard bourgeois description of autonomous art, which more frequently leads to conformist affirmation than to protest; and evenmore glaring is the slide into the discourse of civilization and culture, the central terms in the imperialist ideology of the Central European empires. So, despite the sympathy that Gross may deserve for his personal difficulties, it is not at all clear that the intellectual positions he articulated are so unambiguously desirable that he ought to be ensconced

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as a figurehead of an ongoing counterculture. Weber apparently recognized this tension (35), but in Green's account Weber ends up, by and large, representing the establishment culture against which the Asconans were in revolt.

In the second chapter, Green turns to Gusto Gräser, whom he labels "Ascona incarnate" (82). Gräser can only be described as a hippie *avant la lettre*, a dropout from bourgeois society who, with long hair, beard, headband, and poncho, mixed desultory wanderings with a fascination for Eastern philosophy and a principled resistance to regular labor. His consistent refusal to compromise with established society left a mark on many literati, most notably Hermann Hesse, for whom Gräser represented something of the path not taken. Green makes the intriguing suggestion that the guilt that crops up in much of Hesse's prose, for example in *Steppenwolf*, regarding a continued attraction to bourgeois existence, derives from the challenge Gräser posed to the writer.

Gräser is a crucial figure for Green, since he somehow survived WWII and, before his death in 1958, attracted young admirers who have preserved his legacy, linking the counterculture of Ascona to the 1960s and to the ecological movement of the 1980s. The connection is certainly there, although the following passage probably overstates the case: "Gräser was not in the least a politician. But opponents complain that neither are the Greens: They have no practical policies to offer, no clear leadership structure, no rationales. They make demonstrations and display symbols, and often these are Gräser's symbols: trees, flowers, hiking, sandals. Some of them want a spiritual revolution. . . . Others want a return to nature in social terms, a return to a one-room schoolhouse education, and a peasant agriculture. And their supporters seem to belong, like the Asconans' supporters, to the German culture class, the *Bildungsbürgertum*. (Gräser found his final refuges in the attics of professors)" (81).

Yet, having established this tradition, eight decades of a counterculture, Green falters on examining its problems and internal inconsistencies. Gräser and the ecological movement are not identical, nor need one hide the inadequacies of each. However, Green underscores the continuities: from Gräser to the Greens, from Gross to the anti-psychiatry movement, and from his third figure, Rudolf Laban, theoretician of modern dance, to the contemporary cult of the body. Laban was clearly the most successful of these figures institutionally, which perhaps explains why his case makes the two difficulties with the hypothesis of a countercultural tradition most clear. First, as already noted with regard to Gross, the anti-rationalism and anti-progressivism of the counterculture (i.e., playing out a profound "culture" against a putatively superficial "civilization") brings the cultural radicals close to reactionary positions. In Laban's case this is explicit: after 1933 he did his best to keep peace with the Nazi regime, redefined his work in terms of its "Germanness," contributed to the choreographical plans for the 1936 Olympics, and otherwise nursed some rather racist judgments on non-whites. Because the counterculture prides itself on its distance to the traditional Left of the working-class movement, the Social Democrats and the Commu-

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nists, it is only legitimate to wonder about its own political ramifications and to inquire into the significance of contiguity with *völkisch* positions.

Secondly, in emigration Laban achieved success in unexpected quarters. Dropping the emphatic description *German dance* (an indication that the above concern regarding German irrationalism may be one-sided), Laban could see his technique adopted by the British Ministry of Education in the teaching of technical skills. More importantly, "in 1942, F. C. Lawrence, a management consultant, made contact with Laban, and proposed that they work out together an application of movement analysis to job training and personnel selection in industry .... The two of them, along with a man called Burman, who was both an engineer and an Olympic skater, worked out the Laban-Lawrence Industrial Rhythm, which offered a way to measure the 'kinetic quality' of a piece of work" (113). Thus the theory which began as an articulation of modern dance against the traditionalism of ballet turns out to be a reorganization of the administration of the body in the context of the Taylorization of industry. This implies a critique of the counterculture very different from the one expressed above. The problem with the counterculture may not at all be the close relation to pre-fascist irrationalism, but rather the compatibility with the progress of capitalist rationality itself. Of course, the Asconans and subsequent outsiders pose themselves as outsiders, radical critics of a constrictive system; yet their innovations in modified form contributed to the modernizing transformation and, hence, to the maintenance of the system which they purported to attack.

In the concluding chapters of the book, where Green traces the Asconan idea in art, culture, and politics, he is especially sensitive to the first critique, since his goal is to establish a prehistory for the contemporary alternative movement and the Green Party, which has itself on occasion been subject to similar complaints regarding irrationalism and a similarity to traditionally *völkisch* positions. Green tries to defuse this point regarding Ascona by shifting to the English terrain and suggesting that Leavis and the *Scrutiny* group, saying much the same as a German irrationalist like the publisher Eugen Diederichs, could not be accused of being reactionary; by implication, arguing that Diederichs and the Asconans should also be free of suspicion. The problems here are many: the indisputable differences in the various national cultural contexts, the highly ambivalent status of Leavis in the light of subsequent cultural critics (like Anderson and Eagleton), and, especially, the dubious equation itself of the German and English positions. Green concedes this last point — he admits the difference — but nevertheless wants to cite an English critique of modern civilization as an alibi for the political acceptability of the German version: "Thus the Asconan idea of culture has been a powerful presence in the English-speaking world as late as the middle decades of this century, and has been accorded a high status by intellectuals of many kinds, who saw no kinship between that idea and pre-Nazism" (231).

The apology is unconvincing, because Green appears to be arguing with a

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straw-man. Not even cultural rationalists like Lukács or Fritz Stern (with whose *Politics of Cultural Despair* Green is taking issue) claim that anti-civilization irrationalism always and necessarily turns into fascism. But there is little point in denying that, in the 20th century German context, an intellectual irrationalism fed into a cultural-political milieu that contributed to the rise of Hitler. The judgments on Gross, Gräser, Laban, and the other Asconans ought to be nuanced with this ambivalence in mind.

More than 40 years after the collapse of the Third Reich, twenty years after the summer of love, and in the waning years of the Reagan Revolution, it is the second problem which bears more strongly on the treasures of Ascona. Green begins his account with a reference to the village then and now: "In the late nineteenth century, Ascona was a small mountain village of about one thousand inhabitants. In the mid-twentieth century it became (as it remains) a popular holiday resort, offering golf, tennis, nightclubs, waterskiing. But between these periods it was, briefly, something very different; it became the semiofficial meeting place for all Europe's spiritual rebels" (3). Of course, it was once something different, but just as Laban's modern dance could be appropriated by modern industry, the alternative life-style developed in old Ascona has to be understood as a blueprint for the consumer capitalism of Ascona — and the rest of the West — today: from Gross to our therapeutic culture, from Gräser to our fixation on dietary concerns and nature, from Laban to aerobics. For Green, the Asconans were precursors of the hippies and the Green Party; at least equally plausible is a lineage leading to the aestheticized living of yuppiedom (Gräser's cave as the first condo; from vegetarianism and eurythmics to Jane Fonda's exercises). A full account would have to consider both these aspects, simultaneously grasping the critical and conformist sides of the bohemian antimodernists of 1900. Clearly, the contemporary realization of their positions is far from the original intentions, but equally clear is the process in which the counterculture has ended up as a research and development division for capitalist progress.

Russell A. Berman

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A Labyrinth of Architectural Utopias

Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, translated by Pellegrino d'Acierno and Robert Connolly (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1987).

The Sphere and the Labyrinth is itself labyrinthine. First published in 1980, it is a revision of several previously-published pieces dating from 1972. The body of the text — nine chapters which traverse Western European and American architecture from Piranesi to New York — is presented as a counterpoint to the introduction on historical method. Throughout the text the discontinuities between architectural movements and styles are analyzed to illustrate the limits of utopian predilections. Thus, for example, Tafuri documents the pragmatic American concern with the optimization of land value through the skyscraper. The allegorical variation in the skyscrapers' façades bespake a new Babylon in which form reflects zoning laws supportive of a *laissez-faire* economy, thereby creating an alliance of dramatic architecture and the investment needs of capital. The text includes critical writings such as Eisenstein's "Piranesi, or the Fluidity of Forms" and Raymond Hood's "The City Under a Single Roof."

It opens with Piranesi's utopian prison fantasies: the Carceri. As prelude to 20th century modernism, these etchings are emblematic of the radical shifts in perspective and the perversion of the scenographic as judged from the conventional model of the stage. The complexity of the composition, the randomness and idiosyncratic struggle of images and the representation of the demonic are provided as examples of the Burkian sublime. They also prefigure anarchy and the terms which will make possible a rejection of the 20th century and its demands for a uniform, mechanical order. The imaginary — as disorder reconfigured into a critique of universality — introduces negativity as well as a representational strategy of variation. Once the arbitrary is established as a plausible strategy for the avant-garde, Tafuri can begin to explore urban life. Drama and the cabaret offer the possibility of not just spectacle but collective catharsis. This theme is traced through the dadaist cabarets and the theatre of Meyerhold, Schlemmer, Mayakovsky, Gropius and Piscator. At issue is the fine line between theater as produced for aesthetic or didactic reasons, and the recognition in the first 20 years of this century that the real city is already "total theatre." The haunting question posed for architecture stripped of its traditional dramaturgical function is how to pose an imaginary or spectacular role in a mass society.

With material on the "Constructivist International" and the Socialist City of the USSR from 1917-28, Tafuri shifts the question from drama to the production of city forms seeking equity and quality of life. Suffusing his treatment of

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utopian attempts at creating a decent and promising urbanism is the sincerity of the advocates of international constructivism and, above all for the Soviet contingent, a belief in a proletariat which "does not fear iron and steel." The empirical and bureaucratic refutation of this technological utopia in the first two Five Year Plans is one of the sobering conclusions of Tafuri's treatment. The other, following his discussion of the city in Weimar Germany, is that the political and economic prerequisites for the socialization of the building industry were lacking and, while policies were developed and plans designed, these experiments failed.

In contrast to the European experience with planning the modern city of capital, Tafuri presents the American city as a platform for the development of an American jazz style that is at the same time expressionistic and celebratory. Along with the explosiveness of the urban downtown, zoned for unlimited development, there is, however, the residual love-hate relation with the big city which can be found in suburban new-town developments and the mysticism of Frank Lloyd Wright. Central to Tafuri's account of the skyscraper is the play on the Tower of Babel: the possibility of multiple semantic codes. This play is double-edged in that it creates the possibility of the multiple forms of expression demanded by the market, while at the same time creating the bifurcated society portrayed in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. With this double reference, the apocalyptic anticipations of Piranesi are joined to the utopian notions of unlimited growth.

Urban forms — monumental buildings ranging from Piranesi's prisons to New York skyscrapers of the 'jazz age,' and plans which simultaneously purport to resolve the inequities of class and the alienated methods of design and building such as those of Ernst May for Frankfurt — are part of an architectural approach considered sacred by historians of the avant-garde. Tafuri traces not just the history and creation of these buildings but their relation to the cultural context. He uses the adventures of the avant-garde, including successive flirtations with the idea that architecture can create revolution, to raise the question of whether an ethical architecture is possible. Even a provisional answer to this question must weigh the degree to which the profession of architecture has historically seen itself as privileged, owing to the representative role of the art it practices, to discern and direct forms of social organization.

Space, according to architecture's sense of mission, orients as well as organizes activity. The messages regarding a society which architecture encodes into the built environment tells the story of the way a society is organized (including its hierarchies and infrastructure). Tafuri's question of ethics demands that architects subject their sense of the space they produce as the test of how much of it is a result of the demands of the social and economic orders of a society. Whereas architects might prefer to see the stakes in the game of architecture as being artistic or aesthetic, Tafuri argues this is only one part of the analysis. Aesthetics, when issues of investment in real estate and the creation of an economic infra-

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structure are also at stake, go hand in hand with economics and politics.

What Tafuri demands is that architects and/or architecture recognize the futility implicit in any attempt to separate architecture from the social world it represents. While the mirage of autonomy is more obvious in historical examples, including those that date from the heroic adventures in European social housing in the 1920s and 30s, he equally unmasks the seemingly a-political or anti-political rhetorical flourishes of post-modernism's *pastiche* architecture. If post-modernism offers a free hand to separate stylistic architectural details from their historical context, it does this for a good reason. Seen contextually, the details of a *pastiche* refer to specific patterns of social organization; arbitrarily assembled, they offer a fitting monument to a serial culture in which the different is equated with the new and neither purport any specific social implications. To understand the avant-garde architecture of any period we must ask the questions: Whose interests are being represented? Does architecture periodically link itself to social movements and periodically retreat? Does architecture, either as profession or art form, bear any responsibility for the creation of a social order? To foster this critical questioning, Tafuri traces the various movements recognized as avant-garde.

The book opens with a *prolegomenon* on historical method. Following Benjamin's challenge in "The Author as Producer" (1934) to place "primary emphasis on the function of the work itself within the relations of production" (16), Tafuri locates "architectural history within the . . . social division of labor" (15) in order to disclose the utopian assumptions of avant-garde movements (including those of our currently fashionable, aseptic post-modernism engaged in a quixotic displacement of history). Starting with the unrealized intentions of architects struggling to respond to demands for intelligible forms adequate to mass culture, he approaches historical space as an "interstice" of techniques and languages. (9) Assuming the historical role of ideology, the historian's function is to criticize the normative interpretations of architecture as pure form and discourse and to reconstruct how invention, imagination, revolution and nostalgia inform attempts to build monuments for collective memory.

Using the Freudian notion of 'interminable analysis,' Tafuri scrutinizes the distortion which characterizes architectural discourse. A quotation from *Moses and Monotheism* — "In its implications the distortion of a text resembles a murder: the difficulty is not in perpetrating the deed, but in getting rid of the traces" — legitimates a method of research that demands an analysis of what is missing. It also suggests the strategy that subsequent generations of avant-gardes have to "kill" their predecessors to distinguish themselves. The analysis of Louis Kahn, Robert Venturi, and the New York Five offers the most explicit example of modernism's need to "kill the father." The analysis leads to the conclusion that post-modernist American architects had to reject the call to a social conscience which informed early 20th Century modernism.

Tafuri works with a series of metaphors. The central one, borrowed from

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Carlo Ginzburg and Adriano Prosperi, is that of a jig-saw puzzle in which pieces are missing, thereby creating the possibility of more than one solution. The puzzle solver constructs a scene with the available clues. Rather than engage in the seemingly infinite interpretation of language as an end in itself — a strategy he attributes to critics such as Barthes and Derrida — he argues that it is possible to penetrate the economic and political conditions underlying urban planning, private commissions and the publication of visionary drawings. The key to the illusory autonomy of architectural discourse is the oblique approach developed by Foucault and the theoreticians of the critique of everyday life.

In the third part of his book, in a witty play on Sade ("*L'architecture dans le boudoir*") Tafuri launches a critique against the emptiness of architecture for its own sake. He argues that what distinguishes an architect like Sterling's work is that it is "text" — not an explosion of an imaginary utopia. The textual buildings of post-modernism speak to an order, but a silent and static one. Reference becomes the goal rather than a representation of some version of social promise. Self-referential buildings risk hermeticism. In a summary of architecture's tendency to retreat into an arbitrary professional domain, he argues: "By such means, this architecture reverts to the structural nature of language itself. By deploying a syntax of emptied signs, of programmed exclusions, of rigorous limitations, it reveals the inflexibility of the arbitrary — the false dialectic between freedom and norm inherent to the linguistic order" (273).

Tafuri concludes with a chapter on New York: an "allegory of the Venice of modern times." The city is seen as a Nietzschean "system of solitudes." The Venetian mask ushers in a strong criticism of current architectural debates. In Tafuri's judgment, the architectural game played for its own sake between the advocates of purism, the New York Five (known as the Whites), and advocates of a more congenial historicist eclecticism (known as the Greys) explains why the only option is to wear a mask. That it privileges the arbitrary at the expense of the utopian is a foregone conclusion. In the New York of the 1980s, this translates into the renaissance of the skyscraper under various post-modern masks (and more classic modernist façades) and a new cult of the tower. The financial resurrection of the city has spelled the revitalization of the real estate industry and afforded an expanded role for architects. If Tafuri is correct that "excess is always the bearer of consciousness" (297), the city may go once again on a search for meaning in its architecture. His analysis is undercut with a moralism expressed as anguish for the loss of a utopian agenda. Politically, this translates into a shift of "focus from what the architect wishes to be, or wishes to say, toward what building production represents in the economic game (which) means that we must establish parameters of reading capable of penetrating the heart of the role played by architecture within the capitalist system's magician's tricks" (287).

This book offers a critique of the system as an alternative to the seductive semantic games played by professional architects. It continues Tafuri's earlier argument in *Architecture and Utopia* (1973/English translation 1975), stressing the

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internal gaps within the history and theory of architecture, while documenting the emotional costs to the architectural critic who misperceives the social-utopian intentions of architecture as anything other than a pretext. As it traces the derailings and mistranslations of utopian intentions, it offers a powerful corrective to conventional histories emphasizing the heroism of the avant-garde. It also forces the issue of what the value is to society or the architectural profession of language games played for their own sake.

What this type of analysis also forces is the question of whether an ethical architecture is possible. In this historical analysis, it is shown to be ephemeral and, for the most part, illusory, due to the autonomy contemporary architects accord their work. Whether the profession of architecture — in its theoretical, practical, or academic guises — can meet this challenge is an open question.

Christina Spellman

Philosophy for Art

Arthur C. Danto, *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1986), 216 pp.

Arthur Danto's work often stands between the analytic tradition and the wilds of continental philosophy, as in his books on Nietzsche, Sartre, philosophy of history and philosophy of action. He encourages a tension between these two modernist responses to the collapse of philosophy's place in knowledge. The interaction, or perhaps conflict, between the analytic and continental traditions has usually been discussed in relation to positivism, as in Habermas' effort to unite the anti-positivism implicit within both these traditions. But, surprisingly enough, it is in aesthetics that analytic philosophy provides a rich source for philosophical inquiry. I am thinking, for example, of Nelson Goodman's *Languages of Art* and *Ways of Worldmaking*, two important though not widely read classics. Danto has turned to these issues and in rapid succession brought out *Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, the collection of essays under review, and a third collection to appear under the title *The End of Art*. This explosion of writing is not, however, wholly unexpected. In recent years Danto has been a close observer, critic, and participant in the New York art scene and its recent phases of performance and conceptual art.

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Danto's central aesthetic problems, as we will see, are only possible in the late 20th century and concern the work of such figures as Duchamp, Warhol and Rauschenberg. He describes an artworld of quotation, reproduction, replication, reflexivity, and criticism. It is a period in which art not only bleeds over into popular culture, merchandising and entertainment, but into philosophy of art itself. The archetypical artwork, for Danto, is inherently critical and self-reflective.

Danto's involvement, however, is not merely sociological. His work in aesthetics is motivated by problems such as the ambiguity between philosophical and literary works, the function of the philosophical tradition in interpretation, and the fundamental indeterminacy of concepts at the core of contemporary philosophy. He finds in aesthetics an opportunity to explore the function and future of philosophy, in an age where scientific inquiry cannot encompass the whole of knowledge and yet alternatives seem problematic. His central aesthetic problem concerns what he calls "visually indiscernibles." Such art objects exist in two forms. First he invents thought experiments in which distinct works of art are, nevertheless, visually identical. Imagine, he suggests, a showing of several simple red canvases. Though all the canvases are identical, one is an abstract impressionist work called "Nirvana," another an old fashioned narrative painting called "Israelites Crossing the Red Sea," and still another a minimalist geometric work called "Red Square." A Matisse-like still-life is included called "Red Table Cloth" and to fill out the exhibit a red canvas is exhibited for purely historical interest as the artist Giorgione's prepared canvas for a painting he never completed. Then, to twist the thought experiment further, Danto adds the submission of a radical artist whose red canvas called "Untitled" is merely a found object which he hopes will mock the very idea of the exhibit, in good reflective, post-modernist fashion. All identical canvases are yet distinct works in virtue of their compositional history, authorial intention, expressive content, contextual meaning and critical implications.

The second case of "visually indiscernible" work is between an object of art and an ordinary object. In this case we do not need extravagant thought experiments. Andy Warhol's famous "Brillo Box" exhibit is made of stacked boxes, indistinguishable from the actual boxes of brillo pads found in stores. In contrast to his equally famous "Campbell Soup Can" lithograph, the brillo boxes were to be, aside from their exhibition in a museum, identical to real brillo boxes. Marcel Duchamp invented a Dantoesque genre called "ready-mades," which took absolutely ordinary everyday objects, the more pedestrian the better, and simply exhibited them, sometimes with written titles or mounted, otherwise unchanged. The most famous example was Duchamp's Fountain, in which he submitted to a prestigous show a porcelain urinal, to be exhibited as is, purchased by him from a plumbing supply company. It is important that Danto convince us that these are not fringe, marginal problems of aesthetics. Rather, modern practices reveal a fundamental indeterminacy in the work of art. In

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conceptual or performance art this indeterminacy is carried to its paradoxical conclusion by divesting the artwork of all location or physicality. In one infamous case, the "exhibit" involved coming to a gallery at which the artist had posted a sign that the gallery was closed. The act of posting that sign and creating that situation was in fact the work of art.

In traditional aesthetics, the work of art is distinct from all other objects in two ways. On the one hand, the object of art differs because of how it appears; its form, line, shape or balance. The characteristics are endlessly debated, but the point is always the same; whatever art is, it is a matter of sensitive observation. On the other hand, perhaps the work of art is really only an expression of the artist's feelings? Then the artist could choose almost anything to embody or express those feelings, no matter how mundane or featureless, and what constitutes the distinction between the "best stone" and the "worst statue" is not some ideal formal balance but the presence of subjectivity. Benedetto Croce is often associated with this expressivist theory of art. For Danto, this forced choice is a conceptual dilemma built into the idea of mimesis. The common assumption of the tradition is that the work of art is transparently representative of either things or mental states.

Danto considers such conceptual breakdown a perfect case for philosophical inquiry because the object of art is not a "natural kind." By that he means the distinction between works of art and any other object is not a matter of sensory evidence. Philosophical problems emerge just where differences are neither natural nor given. Therefore "indistinguishables" haunt philosophy: for example, the difference between dreaming and waking states, between deterministic and contingent physical systems, or between external behavior and the internal states of intending, wishing, and meaning. Oddly enough, what other philosophers take as the failure of philosophy, namely perpetuating such insoluble conundrums, Danto considers its only genuine task. As a heuristic of philosophical analysis he suggests: "whenever you think there is a philosophical distinction to be made, . . . manufacture a pair of indiscernibilia belonging to what you suppose are distinct philosophical kinds and then say in what the difference consists — and then . . . apply this method to the present case" (172).

If Danto's treatment of aesthetic indiscernibles can be said to lead to a specific conclusion, and Danto is a very illusive writer, it is his defense of interpretation and theory of art against transparency and mimesis. The work of art is continually under question by interpretation. "Mine is a theory which is not in the spirit of science but of philosophy. If interpretations are what constitute works, there are no works without them and works are misconstituted when interpretation is wrong . . . . The interpretation is not something outside the work: work and interpretation arise together in aesthetic consciousness. As interpretation is inseparable from work it is inseparable from the artist if it is the artist's work" (45).

This conclusion is not, however, a version of Crocean idealism. Knowing the artist's intention is part of identifying a work as an object of art but not because it

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then expresses the artist's feelings. It is not the artist's feelings but the intention that allows for subsequent interpretation and thus makes art possible. Interpretation, not vision, constitutes what is art. Therefore, aesthetic possibility is partly a historical concept. As Nelson Goodman suggests, the question is not "what is art?" but "when is art?" In *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, Danto refers to Duchamp's ready-made of an ordinary snowshovel exhibited with the lame joke "In Advance of a Broken Arm." Danto comments; "Duchamp's snowshovel was pretty banal in the early twentieth century, simply chosen from the set of indiscernible industrial products. . . . But the identical object . . . would have been . . . a deeply mysterious object in the 13th century . . . . It is not difficult to conceive of objects which, though they would not have been works of art at the time they were made, can have in a later period objects precisely like them which are works of art" (45). But Danto still holds that the range of interpretations are constrained by the artist's intention and place in the world: "There is a truth to interpretation and a stability to works of art which are not relative at all" (46).

The power Danto gives to theory or philosophy in determining what art is, and the corresponding weakness of sensory or emotional evidence, is not a simple privilege. It is a field of battle and struggle over the relation between art and cognition. *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* explores, through this battle, the philosophical repression of art in aesthetic theory. "Disenfranchisement" is a thread running through the history of aesthetics. Philosophy wins its autonomy by subjugating art. Aesthetic theories immunize philosophy against contamination by the frivolous but dangerous pretenses of art. Danto recalls how philosophers symptomatically define art as purposeless, disinterested, non-cognitive, spontaneous, intuitive, or mimetic. He refers to the strategies present in Plato's *Republic*, where political war is waged by philosophy against illusion, the senses, doxa, and the copy: all weapons of the artist. This struggle against art reflects, Danto argues, the fear that philosophy will itself finally be revealed as art, as mere entertainment or diversion. For philosophy is a tradition always threatened by accusations that its grasp of reality is all shadow and illusion, its knowledge nothing but conflicting opinions, and its rigor a second cousin to literature.

Danto wants to salvage a role for philosophy. In the essay "Philosophizing Literature," he argues that Derrida's argument on the identity of literature and philosophy is only a tired response to the endless questioning of philosophy in the 20th century. Instead of giving philosophy a technical, analytic task, Derrida, like positivism, dismisses philosophy as a delusion. According to Danto, Derrida's disenfranchisement is similar to Wittgenstein's comment that philosophy begins when language goes on vacation. "And for me it is striking that no more compelling insultation has recommended itself than the lately widely endorsed thought of Derrida: that philosophy is but metaphor and that the texts of philosophy ought to be approached only as a genre of literature. One cannot have a very exalted view of literature if it is an act of deconstructive humiliation

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to assimilate philosophy to it: how high a view of women can we have if 'feminine' is insulting when applied to men?" (168). Putting aside whether Danto is correct in attributing to Derrida the view that calling philosophy a kind of literature is an insult, Danto goes on to argue that the very job of philosophy is precisely to analyze the conceptual differences within indiscernibilia.

In these essays, Danto develops two examples of philosophy's role. The first involves his distinction between deep and surface interpretation. By deep interpretation he means such general theories as Marxism, psychoanalysis or structuralism which "interpret" literary or artistic works as symptoms of forces inaccessible to the artist. These theories represent a "bad" type of philosophy that Danto hopes to abolish. "Deep interpretation . . . refer us to Leonardo's (DaVinci) kinky unconscious, his economic locus, and to the semiotics of embellishment in Florentine culture . . .[which] requires no references to the artist's authority" (P. 66). The antidote to this scientism is what Danto calls surface interpretation which humans learn during socialization and analytic philosophers use in studies of action and language. Surface interpretations stick to intentions and what "speakers or rulers might or must have meant, or would allow upon reflection were they consulted, . . . and constitutes what most closely approaches experimental confirmation in such interpretational practices" (50). Surface interpretations imaginatively reconstruct intentions and thus settle conceptual confusion through understanding, not through sensory evidence and without grand, speculative theories.

Danto's second example of the role of philosophical analysis is, however, more speculative. In two of these essays he puts forward a Hegelian interpretation of the present state of art. Not, I should add, to embrace anything about Hegelian metaphysics, which commits every error of deep interpretation, but to provide an explanation for what he considers "the dismal state of the artworld." he argues that there is an internal relation between the definition of art and theories of art history. After reviewing difficulties with the conception of progress in art and the threat of relativism in art appreciation, he makes a case that art has the kind of history "within which the question of its coming to an end makes sense" (107). The reason Hegel's theory applies is that Hegel conceives progress in representation not in terms of likeness to the perceived world but in terms of cognitive understanding. Art is striving towards knowledge, and when that knowledge is achieved art comes to an end. The Hegelian twist is that the knowledge art aims at is knowledge of art. "History ends with the advent of self-consciousness, or better, self-knowledge. I suppose our personal histories have that structure, or at least our educational histories do, in that they end with maturity, where maturity is understood as knowing — and accepting — what or even who we are. Art ends with the advent of its own philosophy" (107).

Though Danto decries the "disenfranchisement" of art by philosophers, he apparently does not find such disenfranchisement in his own statement that, "art has been a means to philosophy at both ends of its history, but here, especially, when

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transforming itself into its own object, it transformed the whole culture, making a final philosophy possible, it served as an evolutionary means of the highest sort" (210). The attentive reader might suspect that this "final philosophy" and "higher sort" served by the evolutionary means of art is, *voila*, the philosopher Arthur Danto. But no Hegel he, Danto plays for an odd sort of modesty. He adds that though we "breed for" those philosophers equal to the task prepared for us by art's progress toward understanding, "I am but their prophet." For Danto, claiming to be a prophet is the heigth of self-effacement.

From the evidence of these essays and their tone, the days of Socratic ignorance have clearly passed. Often these pieces read like strident resumé glosses, especially in the notes, which begin each essay by indicating what prestigous invitation prompted that writing. In one essay Danto, with what is an unintentionally humorous pretense at being digressive, mentions that "I was naturally pleased when critics said, of my *Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, that it was . . . a work of art in its own light . . . . But the compliment, it seems to me, confuses literary quality with literature" (184). I do not know which critics these were, but unless they are strangely fond of that insular style of writing made popular in Cambridge and now religiously passed on from journal article to journal article in the US, compressing philosophy into narrow scholastic strictures of professionalism, it is quite unbelieveable to find Danto's style a "work of art." Such pretension quickly wears on the reader. These writings are interesting, often helpful, and frequently insightful about the relation between aesthetics and modern philosophy, but they are hardly earth shaking.

Curiously, throughout these essays Danto's voice is resentful. At one point he takes time to explain how the writer, Cynthia Ozick, committed the literary equivalent of what analytic philosophers like to call a "howler." In a short story she has her characters admire Michelangelo's *Rondanini Pietà* at the Milan museum, Castello Sforzesco. The problem is that the story takes place during Italian fascism and at the time the statue was in private hands (Danto tells us the family that owned it; the museum did not yet exist). The statue was moved to that museum in 1953. After showing this philistine lack of attention to detail, Danto concludes; "I would have hated her story even if I did not have this particular reason — or excuse — for hating it" (175).

These comments about Danto's style and what might seem minor quirks are not side issues. He intends that these essays inform by their asides, turns of phrase, and allusive references. The stance he takes, however, is often so exaggerated that one suspects he is lampooning critics who wrap their opinions in theoretical pyrotechnics so as, by a sheer bluff, to turn matters of taste into matters of fact. But these essays, like their author, are never self-deprecating. The humor, when present, is in the form of precious inside jokes that flatter their maker. Danto instructs the reader that "the essays are full of hidden presents — little examples calling in their own right for deep interpretation but needing none so far as just reading the text is concerned. But some readers will

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recognize something as put their just for her or him" (45). Later he threatens us with a quiz: "There even is a sense, which I shall not develop here, in which *Brillo Box* is about the viewer of it — I leave it as an exercise for the reader to figure out how" (180). It all suddenly makes one feel affection for that ribald, rollicking, outrageous, disreputable style of "Jacques le Fataliste" Derrida who, even when trading personal attacks in his hilarious reply to John Searle's analytic "tisking," is always a laughing, self-mocking Socrates and never the professor. After all, philosophy can go only so far; there should be a little room for *chacun à son gout*.

Robert D'Amico

Sociological Power

Michael Mann, *The Sources of Sociological Power*, Vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

I consider the following a valid insight: "Classical sociology . . . emerged by creating the concept of 'society.' But . . . this concept is merely a new cultural designation of the nation state."[1] I also consider it slightly paradoxical, because *most* classical sociologists shared a kind of anti-political bias which led them, if anything, to underemphasize the state, which hid from them the dependency of their concept of society on a historically most unique political environment. In this sense, as in a few others, they were intellectually parochial.

Michael Mann has been involved for years in a work-in-progress of such size and scope that some of his British colleagues (among whom he has many admirers and a few detractors) have taken to speaking of it as "Mick's history of the world." He is thus an intensely, committedly un-parochial scholar. A key feature of his theoretical approach is that, recognizing the contingent nature of those circumstances under which "society" can be plausibly conceptualized as a unitary, bounded entity with highly systemic properties, he prefers to conceive human societies in general as "not unitary systems, but varying conglomerations of multiple, overlapping, intersecting power networks" (521). Among these networks, which connect individuals into analytically distinct, though con-

1. Alain Touraine, in *La Legittimazione del Potere*, edited by Carbonaro (Angeli: Roma, 1986), p. 27.

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cretely overlapping, pluralities characterized by asymmetrical dependency and solidarity, he considers most significant those he labels respectively the "ideological," the "economic," the "military," and the "political" power networks.

Mann uses IEMP as a mnemonic device for these entities, and his whole argument revolves around them, particularly around the changes in the material and social technologies, whereby they become constituted and carry their effects over space and time, relations, and their joint impact upon populations and territories. He also investigates the main organizational configurations which the various power networks can assume *and* the main social uses to which the respective power sources can be put (though in fact he does not sufficiently differentiate these two aspects).

Ideological power focused on the processes whereby meanings, norms, and symbols are generated and attributed social validity. It either "offers a *transcendent* view of social authority" by claiming that human beings "possess ultimately meaningful, often divinely granted, common qualities," which tend to unite individuals separated and contraposed by their relations to other power sources, or operates *immanently*, that is, by "strengthening the internal morale of some existing social group . . . giving it a sense of ultimate significance and meaning in the cosmos" (519). (Medieval Christianity, as it happens, managed to operate both transcendently and immanently).

Mann develops further conceptual distinctions, which cut across the primary one suggested by the mnemonic IEMP, and which he puts to good use in his argument. He distinguishes in particular between extensive and intensive power — respectively, "the ability to organize large numbers of people over far-flung territories in order to engage in minimally stable cooperation," and mobilization or commitment from the participants, whether the area and numbers covered are great or small." He also distinguishes between "authoritative power" ("actually willed by groups and institutions. . . . It comprises definite commands and conscious obedience") and "diffused power" ("spreads in a more spontaneous, unconscious, decentered way throughout a population, resulting in similar social practices that embody power relations but are not explicitly commanded") (7-8). Finally, he distinguishes "distributive" from "collective" power, more or less along the lines of the well-known "zero-sum"/"non-zero-sum" as lying at the same level as the previous ones, having more to do with the uses to which power is put than with the way it is constituted or operates.

I do not wish to give the impression that Mann's concerns are primarily conceptual; far from it. In this volume his conceptual argument is largely subordinated to a different intent: he is theorizing about "social power" mainly in order to describe and account for "the rise of the West," seen as the central theme in world history. Furthermore, in pursuing that intent he resolutely opts for one theoretical approach, the construction of a sociologically-reasoned narrative — an approach he self-consciously develops as an alternative to one which he characterizes as "comparative sociology." As I understand him (for Mann does not

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expend much effort on *methodological* matters), "comparative sociologists" (e.g., Eisenstadt) develop their arguments mainly by juxtaposing accounts of larger, spacially and temporally discrete social units, in order to establish generalizations obtaining across units or to specify differences between them in terms of highly general theoretical concepts.

Finally, Mann explicitly (and for good reason) rejects a common, tempting way of imparting theoretical nerve to an argument constructed diachronically — the notion of *social evolution*. While recognizing that most of the chief developments he surveys — from alphabetic scripts to the iron plough to the infantry drill — constitute massive, irreversible increments in social power, and that their accumulation imparts directionality to "world-historical time," he emphasizes the contingent character of most such developments, and above all the constellations of circumstances which made it possible for them to be accepted and put to use. In other terms, he disclaims that one can legitimately impart theoretical coherence to the events he discusses by seeing them as the unfolding of a *logic* of social differentiation.

This, it should be noted, follows also from his rejection of a unitary, systemic conception of "society." He claims that what exists are often only the shifting relations between power networks, each encompassing within its reach varying numbers of people and assuming or bringing about in them distinctive, overlapping collective identities. Then there is Luhmann's thesis, according to which *society* (and not some less complex social entity) is the locus of social evolution, and simply ceases to have a unitary referent within which one may locate evolutionary mechanisms and processes of variation and selection. By the same token, the imagery itself of "endogenous" as against "exogenous" change, being predicated again on the assumption that societies exist as unitary, comprehensive entities with a definite *within* and *without*, becomes groundless.

Thus, what Mann gives us is very much a *story* — though not quite "the history of the world," for within it the focus periodically shifts to those geographical areas where from time to time the underlying advance of social power finds its "leading edge." This advance, in turn, is mostly propelled by the development of new technical and organizational devices, whereby the various power sources are brought to bear, and by the changing ways in which such developments are combined with one another.

For instance, the Greek cities come to represent, during a certain phase, the "leading edge," because (among other things) of the military advantages of the hopolitic army. But "the secret of the hoplite's success did not reside in the weaponry, nor in the individual soldier himself. It depended upon collective tactics learned through lengthy drilling. In drilling, and probably also in battle, the shield became a collective locking device. It covered the hoplite's left side and the right side of the comrade on his left. Interdependence protected life." By the same token, however, hoplitic drilling and fighting both presupposed and engendered "a high degree of loyalty to the phalanx . . . an enormous

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phsychic *intensification* of the social relationships of the emerging polis" (199), thus a distinctive normative climate, engendering high morale not just among elites but among the common citizenry.

The notion itself of "leading edge" assumes a certain directionality of the whole process — essentially a teleological standpoint, which Mann cheerfully acknowledges. His whole narrative is constructed as the road to (ultimately) the industrial revolution, and to England in the second half of the 18th century. Already in the last third of this volume, England constitutes, as it were, the favorite (though by no means the sole) site of the unfolding argument.

I have some misgivings about this Anglocentric emphasis. Although it has solid methodological justification in the fact that, for instance, England has the earliest fairly reliable accounts of state revenues (accounts which Mann puts to good use), it does appear as the "odd man out" with respect to various aspects of a phenomenon to which Mann rightly attaches great significance — the development of state institutions. Another distinctive feature of his treatment is that it assigns certain decisive components of European development to an earlier date than other authors. For instance, it discounts Weber's thesis by suggesting that "Puritanism emphasized strands in the Christian psyche that had been traditionally present" (398).

Fortunately, these aspects of an acknowledged teleological re-reading of historical experience do *not* cause the argument to become at all parochial. Mann's "history of the world" is not brutally foreshortened by an impatience to get to familiar ground. It unfolds at a leisurely pace over distant places and remote periods, about which he has obviously read a great deal and concerning which he develops arguments which mostly appear informative, judicious and convincing. His accounts of the rise of near-eastern civilization, of the Roman empire, and of Christianity are both narratively lively and theoretically pointed.

What, then, are the main theoretical points? These are to be developed at length in volumes II and III, but already two stand out. First, Mann insists that a correct understanding of his theme can only be reached by conceptually differentiating a *plurality* of sources of power, trends of development, interests, bodies of personnel, and acknowledging both the potentialies of autonomous significance in these various terms. His most valuable contribution to the differentiation, enrichment, and "pluralisation" of our current interpretative frames of reference lies in his recurrent emphasis on *military* developments, which in turn he interprets as having not just technological but also distinctively social and normative components.

Second, Mann emphasizes the highly contingent character of "*die ganze Geschichte*," going so far as to suggest "the conclusion that the *origins* of the European miracle were a gigantic series of coincidences" (565). He also affirms something quite similar concerning, respectively, "the origins of civilization" and "the Greek dynamism." Note, however, that this concerns *origins*: once in place, developments, however contingent, give rise to distinctive and relatively predic-

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table dynamics, which are a plausible topic for middle-level generalizations. For instance, empires tend to succumb to "marcher lords," whose military and civilizational resources had originally been "upgraded" by the empires themselves, in their search for wider and more secure frontiers. In spite of this, it remains true that Mann's explicitly teleological perspective is, so to speak, of the retrospective variety. Outcomes offer a suitable vantage point from which to reconstruct developments leading to them, but those developments are apprehended as (most times, at any rate) intrinsically contingent. Futhermore, these reconstructions are theoretically very open-ended, calling from time to time on different relations of priority and significance between the original quartet of power sources and the related networks and sets of "power actors."

Any attempt to evaluate a projected three volume work from the first volume alone can only be tentative and provisional. Nevertheless, it has convinced me that the project has indeed made an excellent start, and looks likely to become one of the most successful larger scholarly undertakings of these decades. I do, however, have some reservations, — the most significant of which concerns the relatively underdeveloped state of the book's conceptual and theoretical argument. Such matters, one understands, are to be explicitly attended to in the final volume of the book; but meanwhile they do raise doubts. Some rather central concepts are inadequately explicated.

Consider "territory" and "territoriality" — two notions which Mann uses frequently and to which he attaches considerable significance, but without specifying their content. A possible consequence of this is some uncertainty in the text as to whether the Roman empire was just a particularly successful and durable "empire of domination," or exemplified a distinctive new category, the "territorial empire." Perhaps, in order to give some theoretical nerve to these notions, Mann ought to pay more attention to their juridical aspects. In the history of Western law, the transitions from "territoriality" to "personality" and from "personality" to "terriotoriality" were particularly dramatic developments, with well-theorized causes and consequences.

Consider further a concept utterly central to the whole argument, "power network," which is also left relatively unspecified. One wonders what a power network looks like, whether it comprises only "the powerful" or also their subordinates; whether, in those parts of Mann's argument which refer to power networks, the notion of differentiated, competing "elites" would not do as an alternative way of stating the argument. If it would not, what *is* the difference? For instance, how do his notions of "collective" versus "distributive" power (or power uses, as I have suggested) relate to the distinction between "power *to*" and "power *over*"? One can expect that these and similar problems will be discussed in the two forthcoming volumes, and that the solutions offered to those problems will be thoughtful, sophisticated, and well-argued.

Gianfranco Poggi

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Righting the Constitution

Stephen Macedo, *The New Right v. The Constitution* (Washington D.C.: The Cato Institute, 1986).

1987 marked the bicentennial of the US Constitution. Each day the agents of the culture industry filled the airwaves with 60 seconds worth of popular history, epitomized by the "We the People" vignettes. In Philadelphia, the city committee meant to coordinate bicentennial celebrations was more appropriately named "We the People 200, Inc." Stephen Macedo's *The New Right v. The Constitution* is meant to play a vital role in the construction of the competing political agendas which surrounded the bicentennial hoopla. More than anything, the book was an attempt to establish intellectual hegemony over the meaning "We the People." In its discussion of the Constitution and the Supreme Court, it seeks to proscribe the political and moral significance of these institutions, to "constitute" the ideology of the Constitution and thus define the very shape and content of the American polity.

It is not a liberal or progressive attack on Reagan's America, Falwell's theocratic politics, or Meese's doctrine of original intent. It is indeed an attack on all these things from the perspective of the libertarian Right, taking on the politically successful conservative ideology in the name of The True Faith.

The primary focus of *The New Right* is "intent," propounded at every opportunity by such conservative legal luminaries as Meese and Bork. The basic premise of original intent is by now well known. Its supporters argue that the only tool which Courts may use to interpret the Constitution is "the Intent of the Framers": the constitutional law stuck in 1787. The purpose of such doctrine is obvious. If judgments can only be rendered on the basis of the intent of the signers of the Constitution, then the "judicial activism" which has resulted in freedom of abortion, restricted oppressive police practices, and constraints on illegal actions by the Executive Branch would be nipped in the bud. Macedo's thesis is that this doctrine is a betrayal, not only of true conservative principles but of the principles which lie at the foundation of the republic itself. His thesis takes on two forms: one founded in traditional, rational legal political analysis; the other, a more explicit formulation of conservative ideology.

The main argument is simple and seemingly irrefutable.[1] Those who agitate on behalf of the doctrine suppose that it is something fixed and readily accessible. As Macedo points out, however, the Constitution is the result of a collective effort, a document drafted by committee and compromise. To suppose that each of the

1. See my "Truth and Hierarchy: Will the Circle be Unbroken?" in *Buffalo Law Review*, 33 (1984), p. 729.

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Founding Fathers had the same thing in mind when each word of the Constitution was written is unrealistic. Thus original intent, as Meese wants it, does not exist. Moreover, if there was anything the Founding Fathers had in common, it was a belief that the Constitution was to be a document which should evolve as the governing institutional arrangement of a complex and diverse nation. Thus, if there was an original intent, it was (in the narrow sense) that such a doctrine should not and could not govern. Here, of course, Macedo falls into inconsistency. His attack on ideologically-impure conservatives is based on the argument that there is no such thing as original intent or that it is impossible to determine what it was exactly.

The argument that the Founding Fathers intended to create a living document, capable of growth, evolution and change according to historical circumstances, however, is an argument in favor of original intent. Macedo thus retreats from the position that there is no original intent to the position that there is one but it cannot be found, to the position that he knows what it was. Yet his attack on the Administration's view of original intent loses none of its cogency. After successfully demolishing the proponents of original intent on their own terms, he outlines the political stakes. bate. Meese, et. al., argue for judicial restraint because they believe in majoritarian (legislative and executive) democracy or, as Macedo would characterize it, a form of "democracy" which violates the true nature of the US, a dedication to individual initiative, freedom, and property. Reaganism, according to the true Right, "gives us . . . moral skepticism in the service of majoritarianism, masquerading as an innocent respect for the constitutional text."

True conservatives should not decry "judicial activism," since US courts must protect the individual and his property from the tyranny of the majority. Rather, the real agenda " . . . is for conscientious interpreters of the Constitution to correct, not abandon, judicial activism." Judicial activism as a "process" is not bad, only certain results are. At this point, Macedo draws close to Dworkin's position.[2] According to Dworkin, cases for adjudication fit roughly into two categories — those involving questions of principle and those involving questions of policy. Those cases involving principle require the judge to issue decisions based on well-established rules, both of process and substance. Those cases involving policy should be deferred to the legislative process. For Dworkin, principle requires that judges yield to legislators on matters of policy and that they limit policy decisions to their most narrow areas of application. All of this interaction between judicial principle and legislative policy is determined by the super-value of the equality principle.[3] Dworkin and Macedo both seek to create a principled model of adjudication — a theoretical justification for the necessary and practical conflict between the "democratic" desires of the

2. Ronald Dworkin, *Taking Rights Seriously* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978) and the discussion in note 1, at p. 745ff.

3. I have critiqued this position at *supra*, note 1, pp. 746-47.

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majority and the need to protect the minority.

The Dworkin and Macedo programs, however, are doomed to fail for several reasons. First, the distinction between principle and policy is not ontological but political. Macedo's principle is Dworkin's policy. Second, each treats the conflict between policy and principle as something resolvable, when in reality the conflict in judicial adjudication, once seemingly resolved by systemic constraints, will simply give rise to other conflicts.[4] The process of adjudication, as a process of majority *versus* minority, right *versus* wrong, can never "achieve" anything but a temporary, contingent conclusion. *Stasis* is inimical to a vibrant, living democracy. Dworkin and Macedo want a democracy without conflict, a democracy without life.[5]

Here is where the debate should begin. The primary function of Reaganite legalism is to impose a substantive vision of democracy and society, while abstaining from debate over the real, political content of the vision. All is found in original intent; politics is divorced from itself. Macedo has a vision, a political and legal program. While his vision is wrong, founded as it is in isolated, bourgeois individualism and centered in private property, he is right about what kind of constitutional and legal debate is needed. Obfuscating discussions about the propriety of judicial activism is useless. Reagan, Meese and Macedo must be confronted in terms of substance, and the Left must show an equal commitment to Truth, Justice, and the American Way. As Macedo puts it, "The relevant question is not whether America is to be a moral community, but what kind of community it is to be." This debate over "kind of community" requires a substantive vision of authentic American democracy. As the recent controversy over Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court has revealed, the American public is not unaware of the phonyness of the debate over original intent, and that the real question is about the nature of American democracy.

The New Right is an honest, mistaken, and dangerous book. It articulates a political philosophy seeking hegemony in American political life. Macedo wants to control American cultural icons, to wield them as part of a larger political program. The Constitution, "the document itself," "We the People," "The Court," each takes on a life above and beyond political reality. The Right and the Center engage in a battle to make these icons seem alive with a meaning and import which will occupy the hearts and minds of "We the People."

David Fraser

4, See, e.g., Mitchell Franklin, "Legal Method in the Philosophies of Hegel and Savigny," in *Tulane Law Review*, 44 (1970), p. 766.

5. Cf. Duncan Kennedy, "Freedom and Constraint in Adjudication: A Critical Phenomenology," in *Journal of Legal Education*, 36 (1987), p. 518.

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Corrigenda — More or Less

To the Editors:

Although I have no stomach to prolong the polemic launched by Ellen Kennedy's quixotic crusade to tie the Frankfurt School to Carl Schmitt ("Carl Schmitt and the Frankfurt School," in *Telos* no. 71 [Spring 1987], pp. 37-66), one point in her rejoinder cannot be allowed to stand unchallenged. For it concerns a blatant and insidious fabrication of the facts. After citing the argument in *The Dialectical Imagination* that Franz Neumann's *Behemoth* was not considered a genuine expression of the Institute's views, she writes: "What this means, according to Jay, is that 'in Neumann's case political science and law were undiluted by the Institute's psychological approach to Nazism. All this boils down to the fact that much of Neumann's method came from Schmitt.' " ("Carl Schmitt and the Frankfurt School: A Rejoinder," in *Telos* no. 73 [Fall 1987], p. 103). Her accompanying footnote attributes the quoted sentences to page 162 of my book. Not only do they fail to appear on that page or anywhere else in *The Dialectical Imagination*, but the last sentence is diametrically opposed to my own argument. Kennedy is apparently so taken with her fantasy about Schmitt's powerful influence on Critical Theory that she now imagines it is endorsed by others as well. What inferences can be drawn for her whole argument from this bizarre episode I leave to *Telos*' readers to ponder.

Martin Jay

Editors' Reply

Although Jay is technically correct, what is at stake here is a minor footnoting misdemeanor rather than a major academic felony. To call it a "blatant and insidious fabrication" is not just an exageration, but a diversionary tactic meant to avoid confronting more substantial matters concerning which, pending a better argument, Kennedy is clearly right.The footnote number Jay refers to should have come after the first quotation, which does appear in *The Dialectical Imagination*. The subsequent lines are Kennedy's and should not have been set in quotation marks. Because of this inadvertent use of quotation marks, however, it is unlikely that any reader could have misunderstood who was claiming what. If anything, Jay should have criticized Kennedy for pompously trotting out a fashionable but vacuous notion of "method" as the intellectual legacy Neumann inherited from Schmitt. What "method"? All Schmitt engages in is rigorous and clear thinking, which even academics occasionally employ when not trying to bluff their colleagues by passing off the banal as scholarly profundity. If Neumann took anything from Schmitt, it was *substance*. He did not need Schmitt to tell him how to think. On the other hand, why is it so difficult for the "dialectical imagination" to admit that there is nothing shameful in the fact that the more politically-sophisticated members of the Frankfurt School learned something from Schmitt?

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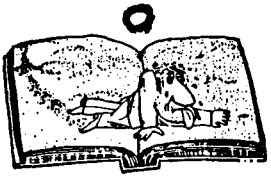

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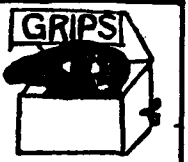

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